



SOCIO-CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE MARKET OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Khalmurzayeva Naima Fatikhovna

Senior Lector, "Management and Marketing" Department Kimyo International University in Tashkent

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the study of sociocultural, economic and psychological aspects of consumer behavior in the educational services market. The author examined the factors influencing the choice and perception of educational products by consumers and comprehensively covered the factors influencing the formation of consumer desires in the field of education, including sociocultural, economic and psychological aspects.

KEYWORDS: *higher education, cultural aspect, personal aspect, social aspect, psychological aspect, motivation, lifestyle.*

INTRODUCTION

In the current economic environment, businesses are faced with intense competition, where companies are struggling to strengthen their position by offering products and services that meet the needs of their customers. This requires businesses to constantly evolve and adapt to changing market demands in order to successfully compete and retain their audience.

With the development of technology, new materials and innovations in marketing methods stimulate the emergence of new products and services in the market. This dynamic process of innovation and improvement helps companies not only meet existing needs, but also create products and services that meet new market and consumer demands. Modern consumers are becoming more and more demanding of the quality of goods offered and the level of service. They expect not only high-quality products, but also high-quality service, an individual approach and satisfaction of their needs. In such conditions, companies are forced to strive for continuous improvement and enhancement of their products and services in order to maintain customer loyalty and attract new ones. The relationship between consumers and sellers plays an important role not only for individual companies, but also for the entire society. The quality of interactions between buyers and sellers can shape the overall culture of service and consumer behavior, influencing the level of trust in market relations and overall economic dynamics. Successful and satisfied consumers can contribute to the growth of companies' reputations and create a positive overall atmosphere in the market. Understanding consumer choice allows you to maintain their loyalty and attract new customers. In conditions of strong competition, research into the behavior of potential buyers becomes key. Consumer behavior in a modern and dynamic market is driven by many factors. This may include cultural, social, psychological and personal aspects, as well as the influence of advertising, pricing policies, preferences and previous experiences of the consumer. Studying this process helps companies adapt their strategies, understand customer needs and expectations, thereby more effectively influencing their behavior and offering more relevant products and services. Analysis of the concept of "consumer behavior" helps to understand this issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As Lysova notes in her article (2019), in the modern world the concept of "consumer behavior" is used to define:

- Actions of people to acquire, consume goods and services and get rid of them;
- Activities directly involved in the acquisition, consumption and disposal of products, services, ideas, including decision processes that precede and follow this activity;
- The unity of the process of consumer decision-making about a purchase and the factors that determine its nature and direction;



- The process of forming market demand of buyers who select goods taking into account existing prices;
- A set of signs and indicators characterizing the actions of consumers, including their consumer preferences, demand for goods and services, consumption structure, methods of using income.

Since the emergence of the concept of consumer behavior, scientists from various periods and areas of psychology have expressed their views on consumer behavior. For example, the ideas and works of scientists such as Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner, Edward Thorndike and many others have had a significant impact on the understanding and study of consumer behavioral aspects. These different perspectives and theories in behaviorism have contributed to the development of understanding of motivation, habits, responses to incentives, and other aspects that influence consumer behavior. Studying these theories and principles helps modern companies better understand how consumer behavior is shaped and how to influence their purchasing and consumption decisions.

The definition of the concept of “consumer behavior” by different scientists is presented in the table below (Table-1).

Table-1
Definition of “Consumer behavior”

Authors	Definition
Peter D. Bennett (1995)	Consumer behavior refers to “the mental and emotional processes and observable behavior of consumers during the search for, purchase and subsequent consumption of a product or service.”
M. Holbrook, E. Hirschman (2001)	Consumer behavior is an experiential process in which users of products find interest through which they express their feelings of joy and pleasure.
I.V. Aleshina (2006)	Consumer behavior is the activities directly involved in acquiring and disposing of products, services, ideas, including the decision processes that precede and follow these activities.
D. F. Angel, R. D. Blackwell, P. W. Miniard (2009)	Consumer behavior is the action that directly relates to obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services, including the decision-making processes that precede and follow these actions.
Michael R. Solomon (2017)	Consumer behavior is the study of the process involved in individuals or groups selecting, purchasing, using, or disposing of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and wants.
Agarwala, Mishra and Singh (2018)	Consumer behavior refers to the attitudes, values and actions manifested from the consumers’ point of view.
Nasse (2021)	Consumer behavior is a pattern of purchases or repeat purchases with certain choice, consumption, quality, taste, advertising or price requirements and expectations.

From the listed definitions of consumer behavior, it is clear that each scientist approaches this concept with a unique perspective. These definitions highlight the variety of approaches to understanding consumer behavior, noting its psychological, emotional, practical and social aspects in the process of acquisition, use and satisfaction the needs.

METHODOLOGY

At various stages of the work, in accordance with the assigned tasks, methods of abstract-logical, systemic, comparative, structural, matrix, functional, factorial, cause-and-effect, and economic-statistical analysis were used.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding consumer behavior is very important to any successful marketing strategy. By analyzing the factors influencing consumer behavior, educational institutions can develop effective marketing strategies that meet the needs and desires of their target audience. This is why studying consumer behavior in the field of educational services is key for marketers. Understanding what factors influence students’ decision-making about choosing certain educational services becomes the basis for an effective marketing strategy. This helps marketers adapt their strategies in order to meet the needs and preferences of students. By considering the influence of these factors on decision-making, marketers can develop more attractive offers and communication strategies that will help educational institutions determine which aspects of an educational product (curricula, educational quality, faculty, institutional reputation)

play a key role in students' purchasing decisions. If we consider consumer behavior in the field of educational services, we can note that the process of making consumer decisions in the educational services market is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors.

Internal factors of consumer behavior relate to how individuals interact with environmental influences, group factors, and marketing strategies. Internal factors influencing consumer behavior in higher education include personal goals, educational needs, preferences for specialization, individual skills and abilities, and level of motivation to obtain an education. And also, internal aspects often relate to psychological elements of behavior, such as: information processing for making decisions about choosing a university, motivation, emotions and lifestyle (Figure-1).

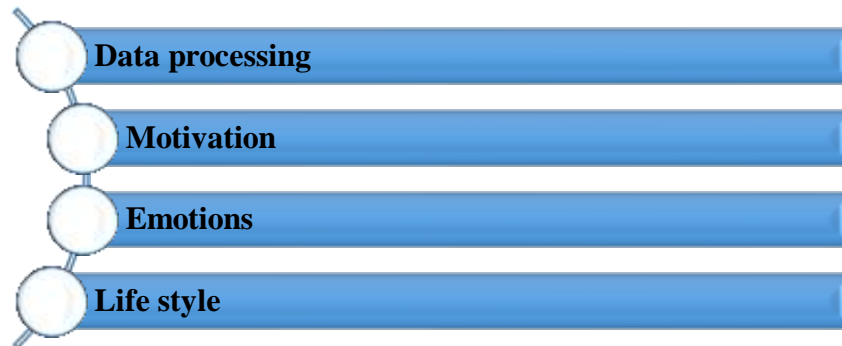


Figure-1. Internal Factors Influencing Consumers of Educational Services.

Johnston (2010) analyzes Western youth to process information when making decisions about choosing a university and identifies the following most significant criteria:

- Academic reputation of the university (prestige, rating);
- Location of the educational institution;
- Distance from place of residence (availability of hostels for non-residents); – “usefulness” of the courses (level of knowledge corresponding to the requirements of modern production);
- The possibility of subsequent successful employment.

Abdrakhmanova and Nikonina (2017) in their article highlight that the conscious choice of comprehensively informed applicants is no less important for educational service providers who recognize that the effectiveness of the choice is determined not so much by attracting more young people to universities, but by their focus on succeeding in their studies and maximum return from the education received in the future. After all, when studying consumer behavior, we cannot ignore the post-consumer process. By the word “post-consumption process” we mean the stage that occurs after the consumer purchases a product or service. This stage covers aspects such as use of the product, satisfaction with the purchase results, reflections on the product and its impact on future purchases.

Motivation of consumers of educational services means a dynamic process that directs and influences the behavior of a given consumer, stimulating him to certain actions or goals. Stimulation, in turn, may include the desire to acquire new knowledge, develop skills, or gain certain experience through educational programs or services. Motivation plays a key role in choosing educational services. It can be a determining factor that influences which training program or educational institution a person chooses (Figure - 2).

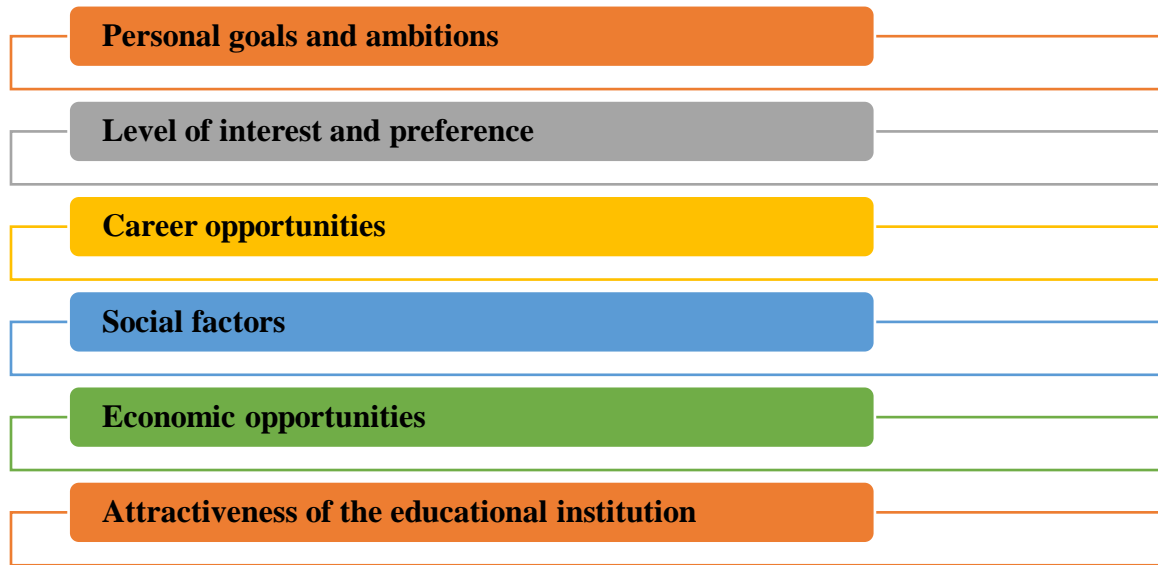


Figure - 2. The key role of motivation in the choice of Educational Services

Personal goals and ambitions: Motivation can stem from personal goals and aspirations. For example, a person may be motivated to gain specific knowledge or skills for their career, to broaden their horizons, or to achieve personal development.

Level of interest and preference: Motivation may be related to the level of interest in a particular field of knowledge or specialization. If a person is passionate about a particular topic, this can be a key motivating factor when choosing an educational program.

Career opportunities: Many choose educational services to improve their prospects in the labor market. The motivation here is related to how the training program will help them in their career growth or acquiring new skills for work.

Social factors: motivation can also be driven by external factors such as the expectations of family, society, or friends. some may choose certain programs or schools because of social status or prestige.

Economic opportunities: availability of financial resources and opportunities for obtaining financial support also influence motivation. people can choose programs that suit their financial capabilities.

Attractiveness of the educational institution: the reputation of the educational institution, the quality of education, opportunities for the practical application of knowledge - all this can serve as motivating factors for choosing a particular educational institution.

Motivation is an individual and multi-layered aspect when choosing educational services. Understanding it helps institutions to adapt their programs and strategies to attract students to meet their needs and expectations.

Emotions and lifestyle also have a significant impact on the choice of educational services. Attractiveness and emotional involvement of educational program or educational institution that evokes positive emotions or engages emotionally tends to attract students. This may be due to the institution's reputation, culture, attractive environment, or reviews from other students.

In terms of consistency with students' values and lifestyle, they often choose educational services that are consistent with their values and lifestyle. For example, programs that support specific social or environmental causes may attract students who share those values.

In addition to internal factors, consumer behavior is also influenced by external factors. They are mostly related to marketing communications. Marketing communications of educational services represent a force that enhances the impact of an educational institution on the consumer and stimulates him to make a decision about enrolling in an educational institution. They are an additional mechanism that activates the consumer's interest and contributes to the formation of his decision to purchase a product. In addition, external factors include the reputation of the educational institution, the quality of educational programs, the availability of financial opportunities (scholarships, loans), the location of the university, employment opportunities after graduation, as well as the impact of public opinion and advertising campaigns (Figure - 3).

These factors jointly shape the decisions of applicants and students regarding the choice of a particular institution or program of study in higher education.

Public opinion and advertising campaigns can influence students' perception of an institution and their decision to enroll. Reputation, branding and publicity campaigns can create a perception of a university that can influence the institution's attractiveness to future students.



Figure-3. External Factors Influencing Consumers of Educational Services.

According to Malykh (2020), the reputation of an educational institution is a response to purposeful and random (natural) forms of university development in a certain society. The reputation of a university is prestige, quality characteristics that are perceived by those outside the university walls. The image of a university plays a key role in attracting students and solving the tactical problems of an educational institution. Image is something that forms the perception of an educational institution and its styles, values and characteristics. But it is worth noting that it is dynamic and must evolve along with changing trends and fashion, in addition, it is necessary to take into account changes in the values of members of society. Keeping up with modern trends matters because current students may be more inclined to choose an institution that looks modern and matches their idea of modern education. This may include modern design of classrooms, use of the latest technologies in teaching, a variety of cultural and social events, active use of social networks, etc. However, it is important to find a balance between modern trends and maintaining the uniqueness and value of the educational institution. The image should reflect not only temporary modern styles, but also the values, quality of education and culture that make the institution special and attractive to students. Constantly updating the image of a university in accordance with current trends allows educational institutions to remain attractive to students and meet their expectations, which is an important tactical task in the field of education.

The level of the educational program at a university depends on external factors, such as changes in regulatory requirements, the economic situation in the country, changes in the educational demands of society, including the preferences of employers and other changes in the environment. These factors influence the quality of education within the university, both in the learning process and in the results that students achieve. Thus, the quality of a university's

educational program often depends on how the institution responds to external changes and adapts its programs, teaching methods and resources to remain actual and relevant to the changing situation around it.

Financial affordability refers to the availability of funds or resources that are available for use or investment for a specific purpose. This is an important aspect for consumers, businesses and society as a whole.

The location of a university is its geographic location or location on a map. This is a key factor in choosing a school for many students. Location can have a significant impact on the learning experience and overall student life. As Puchkov (2011) noted in his works, one of the important features that distinguishes universities is the special complex spatial organization of the territory, the spatial environment and the unique architectural and spatial appearance.

Post-graduation employment opportunities are an important factor that students typically consider when choosing a university or program of study. This aspect is directly related to future career prospects and the successful integration of graduates into the labor market.

In the literature one can find various methods for classifying aspects of influence on consumers of educational services. For example, F. Kotler divides all aspects that influence consumer behavior into four groups (Figure - 4).

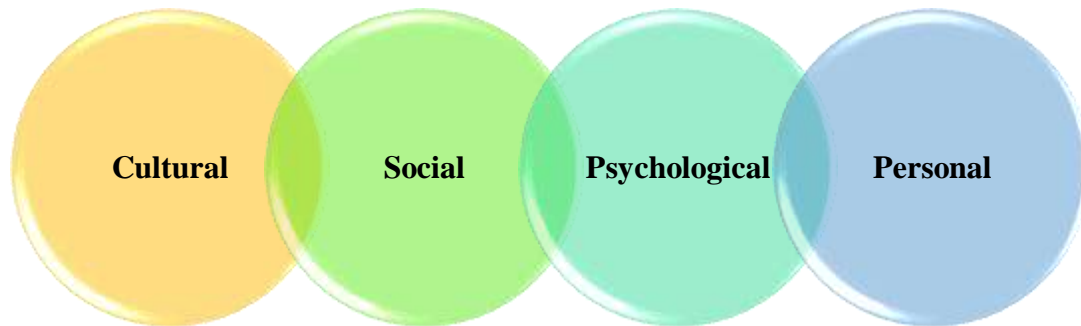


Figure – 4. Aspects Influencing Consumer Behavior

Culture is a powerful force that regulates human behavior. It consists of a common set of behaviors that are transmitted and maintained by members of a particular society in a variety of ways (Arnold and Thompson, 2005). Cultural aspects play a significant role in influencing consumers and their behavior in the context of consuming goods and services. The following cultural aspects have a profound impact on consumer behavior, and understanding these characteristics helps companies tailor their products and marketing strategies to the specifics of different cultural environments.

Values and Beliefs: Cultural values and beliefs shape consumer attitudes and expectations. They determine what is considered important or moral in a particular culture, which influences the choice and purchase of goods.

Behavioral norms: Cultural norms define socially acceptable forms of behavior. For example, in some cultures, the consumption of goods may be associated with social status or social recognition.

Symbolism and Imagery: Various cultural symbols and images are used in advertising to create a connection with specific consumer groups. This may include the use of traditions, customs or linguistic elements that are relevant to a particular culture.

Collectivism and Individualism: Cultural context can support collective or individual values. For example, in collectivistic societies, purchasing decisions may be based on the opinions or expectations of the group, while in individualistic cultures individual preferences are more important.

Rituals and traditions: In some cultures, the consumption of goods and services is closely associated with religious or cultural rituals. For example, special holidays may be associated with certain purchases or gifts.



Cross-Cultural Differences: Different cultures have different preferences and expectations for products and services. Successful companies take these differences into account when developing marketing strategies for different regions or cultures.

Social influence plays an important role in shaping consumers' intention to engage in various behaviors, including purchasing products, adopting new technologies, and adopting new social norms. Social influence can take many forms, including social norms, social identity, social support, and social comparison (Kulvivat, Bruner II, & Al-Shurida, 2009). For example, if a consumer's peers regularly engage in a particular behavior, such as recycling or using public transportation, this may create a social norm that encourages the consumer to also engage in that behavior (Melnick, Carrilat, & Melnick, 2022). This is why we can identify several influences of social norms on the behavior of consumers of educational services:

Social Approval: If a social group (peers, friends) recognizes the importance of education and the pursuit of it, it can create a norm that encourages others to engage in the same behavior. For example, if others are actively looking for new educational programs or discussing the benefits of learning, this can inspire and motivate the consumer to join in this activity.

Social Expectations: The expectations of a social group can influence the choice of educational programs or institutions. If a particular educational institution or training program receives recognition and approval from the social environment, this may be an additional incentive for the consumer to consider it as an option.

Desire for social adaptation: The desire to fit into a social group can inspire the choice of a specific educational path. For example, if respect for certain professions or educational institutions prevails in a certain social group, consumers may be inclined to make such choices for social adaptation.

Thus, we can emphasize that social norms and expectations created by the surrounding social environment can have a significant influence on the choice and orientation in the field of educational services, similar to what happens in other areas of consumer activity.

Psychological aspects play an important role in shaping consumer behavior of educational services. Because understanding psychological aspects allows training organizations to better address the needs, preferences and behavioral patterns of their customers, and create more effective marketing strategies and products that meet the expectations and demands of the audience. Psychological factors of consumer behavior traditionally include: motivation, personality type, values, beliefs, attitude, perception, lifestyle (Posypanova 2012). Many psychoanalytic approaches are based on the idea of the existence of basic unconscious needs that determine human behavior. These needs may be related to compensating for shortcomings or the desire to avoid fears and provide a sense of security. Driven by motive, the consumer is ready to take any action and the nature of the action will depend on how the person perceives the situation (Plotnikova N.I.).

Freud's theory of subconscious complexes serves as the basis for understanding consumer motivation in psychology. According to Freud, understanding buyer behavior is greatly facilitated by turning to the most persistent part of psychological human nature - the unconscious (Golubkov 1999).

A belief is an idea about something that can influence people's decisions and actions. Manufacturers seek to understand consumers' beliefs about their products or services because these beliefs determine how people make purchases and decisions. It is worth noting that consumer beliefs are greatly influenced by the brand and country of production.

According to Aleshina (2006), an attitude represents a stable positive or negative assessment of an object by an individual, the feelings experienced towards it, as well as the direction of probable actions in relation to it.

Personality type refers to the unique traits found in each individual that determine their behavior, preferences, and reactions to different situations. These types are often based on various models or theories that describe personality



characteristics such as extraversion or introversion, emotional stability, etc. They can influence consumer behavior, preferences and the way they interact with the world around them.

According to Tikhomirova (2013), customer value management enables the company to achieve a profitable and competitively advantageous position. The measurement of customer value is based on the monetary value of those technical, economic, operational and social benefits of a marketing offer that the consumer perceives and for which he is willing to pay a set price (Rebin 2004).

Consumer lifestyle is habits, values, interests, preferences and behavioral patterns that characterize a person's way of life. It is a broader concept than just purchasing behavior because it includes ideas about how a person spends his time, what he values, how he organizes his life, and what social and cultural preferences he has. Lifestyle defines how a person chooses consumer goods and services in accordance with his personal values, interests and needs. For example, a person who values an active lifestyle and is concerned about health may prefer sporting goods or organic products. This approach allows us to better understand what factors can influence consumer choices and decisions.

As for the personal aspects of influencing the consumer, they together form the individual preferences and decisions of consumers. Understanding these aspects helps companies create more targeted marketing strategies and products that meet the needs and preferences of their target audience. The following personality aspects have a significant impact on consumer behavior:

Personality type: Personality characteristics such as extraversion, introversion, neuroticism and others can determine preferences and style of consumer behavior.

Values and Beliefs: Personal values and beliefs influence the choice of goods or services, guiding a person towards products that correspond to his values.

Self-Perception: How a person sees himself and strives to be perceived by others influences his purchasing behavior.

Goals and Motivation: Personal goals and motivation shape preferences in the choice of goods and services, guiding the consumer to satisfy his needs.

Degree of Involvement: The level of involvement a person has with a product or brand also determines their purchasing behavior and loyalty.

Risk level: Personality traits can influence the perception of risk in purchases, which in turn influences decision making.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that modern educational institutions must not only be competitive, but also understand that successful survival in the field of education requires a deeper understanding of consumer behavior. Consumers of education services play a key role in shaping market dynamics. To attract and retain customers, in this case students, it is important to take into account their needs, preferences and motivation. Only by taking into account and influencing these factors educational institutions will be able to strengthen their positions in the educational services market and attract the attention and loyalty of students.

LITERATURE

1. Agarwala, R., Mishra, P., & Singh, R. (2018). *Religiosity and consumer behavior: a summarizing review*. *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, 16(1), 32-34.
2. Arnold, E. J., & Thompson, C. J. (2005). *Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research*. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31, 193-219.
3. Johnston T.C. *Who and What Influences Choice of University? Student and University Perceptions // American Journal of Business Education*. – 2010. – № 10. – P. 15-24.
4. Kulviwat, S., Bruner II, G. C., & Al-Shuridah, O. (2009). *The Role of Social Influence on Adoption of High Tech Innovations: The Moderating Effect of Public/Private Consumption*. *Journal of Business research*, 62(7), 706-712.



5. Melnyk, V., Carrillat, F. A., & Melnyk, V. (2022). *The Influence of Social Norms on Consumer Behavior: A Meta-Analysis*. *Journal of Marketing*, 86(3), 98-120.
Solomon, M. R. *Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having and Being*. 12-th edition, Pearson, 2017. -633 p
Лысова Е.А. (2019). *Поведение Потребителей: Содержание Понятия, Социально-Экономическая Сущность*. *Вестник Воронежского государственного университета*. Серия: Экономика и управление, Peter D. Bennett, ed. *Dictionary of Marketing Terms*, 2nd ed. 1995 -344 p
8. Абдрахманова Лилия Виловна, Никонова Элина Ильдусовна (2017). *Основные факторы, влияющие на выбор вуза абитуриентом*. *Вестник экономики, права и социологии*, 113-116.
9. Алешина И.В. *Поведение потребителей: учебник*. – Москва: Экономистъ, 2006. – 525 с.
10. Голубков Е.П. *Основы маркетинга: учебник*. – Москва: Издательство «Финпресс», 1999. – 656 с.
11. Малых С.В. *Репутация университета как основа развития // Социология*. 2020.
12. Плотнокова Н.И. *Психологические аспекты поведения потребителей на рынке*. *Молодежная наука: тенденции развития*, 2021. 37-42 с.
13. Посьтанова О.С. *Экономическая психология: психологические аспекты поведения потребителей: монография*. – Калуга: Изд-во КГУ им. К.Э. Циолковского, 2012. – 296 с.
14. Пучков, М. В. (2011). *Университетский кампус. Принципы создания пространства современных университетских комплексов*. *Вестник Томского государственного архитектурно-строительного университета*, 79-88.
15. Ребрин Ю.И. *Управление качеством: учебное пособие*. – Таганрог: ТРТУ, 2004. – 174 с
16. Тихомирова И.И. *Принципы И Концепции Формирования Модели Управления Поведением Потребителей На Основе Персонализированных Ценностей*. *Новое Слово В Науке И Практике: Гипотезы И Апробация Результатов Исследований*, 2013. -200-205 С.
17. Холбрук М. *Эмпирические аспекты потребления : фантазии, чувства и удовольствие потребителя*. *Классика маркетинга / М. Холбрук, Э. Хиришман*. – СПб. : Питер, 2001. – 752 с
18. Энджел Д. Ф. *Поведение потребителей / Д. Ф. Энджел, Р. Д. Блекуел, П. У. Миниард*. – СПб. : Питер Ком, 2009. – 759 с