Grill'd Buyer Behaviour: Theoretical Analysis

Academic Writing Sample

Student: Leonie Hope Course: 2004MKT Consumer Psychology

Contents

1.0 Brand Overview	3
2.0 Problem Recognition Decision-Making Analysis	3
3.0 Information Search/Evaluation of Alternatives Decision-Making Analysis	5
4.0 Purchase Behaviour/Post-Purchase Behaviour Analysis	7
5.0 Sustainability/Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Analysis	8
6.0 Marketing Strategy Recommendations1	1
7.0 References	3

1.0 Brand Overview

Established in 2004, Grill'd is an Australian restaurant chain that focuses on making wholesome burgers. It promotes sustainability (Grill'd-6, n.d.) and a healthy lifestyle (Grill'd-1, n.d.). Grill'd have recently repositioned the brand to highlight this with a new tagline, 'Natural. Sustainable. Healthy,' (Grill'd-2, n.d., 0:26) to attract the ideal consumer; Hannah. This paper will analyse Hannah's consumption and buyer behaviour through motivational, personality, and attitude theories, the classical human decision-making model, and the concepts of conformity and consumer self-concept.

2.0 Problem Recognition Decision-Making Analysis

The Grill'd persona is Hannah (Figure 1.0), a twenty-six-year-old full-time teacher who lives in the suburbs with her partner. Hannah is university educated, social, environmentally conscious, and vegan. She likes eating out, attending festivals, volunteering, and supporting sustainable practices.



Figure 1.0 Grill'd Consumer Profile - Hannah Persona

Hannah's problem is feeling hungry, which sounds simple to solve but has additional considerations. She needs to choose somewhere to eat that has delicious food, aligns with her values and beliefs, and is acceptable to her friends. As a high involvement consumer (Roe and Bruwer, 2017), Hannah employs an extensive problem-solving process (Pellemans, 1971). Deci and Ryan's Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivational Theory (Bloom and Colbert, 2011) and Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory (Carveth, 2017) can help her decision-making.

2.1 Deci and Ryan's Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivational Theory

Intrinsic motivation is when satisfaction occurs from internal factors rather than external rewards (Bloom and Colbert, 2011). This consumer is motivated by doing what feels good for them instead of what pleases someone else (Bloom and Colbert, 2011), which is extrinsic motivation. In Hannah's case, the intrinsic motivation driving a solution to the problem of where to eat to satisfy her hunger comes from engaging with a brand that similarly values health and lifestyle. The extrinsic motivation is about finding a restaurant that also makes her friends happy, thus rewarding her (Bloom and Colbert, 2011) with continued friendship and a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1943).

Protecting the environment is important to Hannah, so her choice of restaurant needs to reflect that. She's looking for ones that practice sustainability beyond the minimum legislated requirements, such as plastic-free straws. This helps her to feel good about reducing her carbon footprint. While Hannah needs vegan food options, she also has non-vegan friends she would like to eat out with. Her restaurant choice would ideally cater to multiple dietary requirements so they can all enjoy the same restaurant without compromising their values.

Hannah's volunteer work makes her conscious that she has more than some people. She sometimes feels guilty (Carveth, 2017) about having the money to eat out. To counteract this and make it a more altruistic experience, Hannah would like the opportunity to give back through the restaurant to feel like her choice makes a difference. Grill'd meets all of Hannah's considerations and intrinsic and extrinsic motivations about eating with friends.

2.2 Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory

Freud (1923) suggests three personality factors result in unconscious motivation; the id, superego, and ego. The id is all about pleasure and immediate satisfaction of a need or desire (Carveth, 2017). The superego is the moral compass that wants to restrict pleasure-seeking and follow societal norms (Carveth, 2017). The ego is the mediator that attempts to manage the id and balance the constraints of the superego (Carveth, 2017). In terms of Hannah's consumer behaviour, her id follows the 'pleasure principle' (Robinson et al., 2021) and is unconcerned with what food she eats, as long as it tastes good. It does not care about the consequences of how she might feel after eating something non-vegan. This conflicts with the superego, whose job ensures that her food choices accord with the rules, values, and beliefs that govern it; flavour and taste are almost irrelevant.

The ego then acts as a middleman to find something to satisfy Hannah's hunger and meet the needs of the id and superego. The solution must also support her intrinsic motivations (Bloom and Colbert, 2011) of being vegan, cruelty-free, and sustainable, and her extrinsic motivation (Bloom and Colbert, 2011) of shareability with friends. Grill'd would assuage the id by indulging in a burger and dinner with friends and placate the superego with its sustainability and community focus. Therefore, Grill'd would be the responsible choice for the ego; however, further research and evaluation of acceptable alternatives are required to confirm this.

3.0 Information Search/Evaluation of Alternatives Decision-Making Analysis

Hannah can use the list of requirements a restaurant must meet to solve her hunger problem as a framework to search for information and evaluate alternatives (Pellemans, 1971). There are two main ways Hannah will do this; reference groups and compensatory and non-compensatory rules.

3.1 Reference Groups

The primary method for Hannah to source information about restaurants that meet the requirements outlined in the problem recognition analysis is recommendations from associative reference groups (Shareef et al., 2019). While these include all Hannah's family, friends and work

colleagues, it is likely to target those who are also vegan. Hannah could elicit these recommendations in a variety of ways.

In the case of work colleagues or family and friends she knows well, a conversation either by phone or face-to-face would be the most efficient method. These would provide higher quality tailored results as they know her. Hannah could also ask via text, email, or social media platforms like Messenger or WhatsApp; however, this may involve some back and forth. Posting on Facebook or Twitter is another option, but it is open to all friends and followers, including nonvegans, unless it is a pre-determined vegan-only group. This could provide mixed results and add to the required research, so it is only recommended if required. Social media is a valuable tool (Shareef et al., 2019) for Hannah to research the recommendations, which she would likely do as a highly involved consumer (Roe and Bruwer, 2017). Online reviews also fit the associative reference group (Shareef et al., 2019). They are another avenue Hannah may use to validate her choice and will influence her decision similarly to those she knows (Li et al., 2021).

3.2 Compensatory and Non-Compensatory Rules

Consumers bring individual criteria to the decision-making process to provide shortcuts when comparing products or services (Lima et al., 2013). They are, in effect, a set of rules that determine the order of importance of each requirement to achieve the desired outcome. Non-negotiable criteria, or non-compensatory rules, must be met, or that option is automatically rejected (Aribarg et al., 2018). Compensatory rules allow for compromise, where one criteria's attribute is offset by another (Aribarg et al., 2018).

Hannah's non-negotiable attributes align with her beliefs and values as a consumer. These include vegan options, which automatically rules out restaurants without them. A healthy lifestyle focus rules out junk or fast food. Hannah's desire to reduce her environmental impact and make a difference in the community rule out any restaurant without these practices. And food that tastes good is the last non-negotiable. To achieve these non-compensatory criteria, Hannah may be willing to compromise on price and location; her compensatory rules.

Once Hannah has collected all the data, she would take the recommendations from her associative reference group and compare them against her compensatory and non-compensatory rules. This

part of the decision-making process would likely lead to Grill'd, as it has positioned itself to meet Hannah's requirements for dining out with friends.

4.0 Purchase Behaviour/Post-Purchase Behaviour Analysis

The outcome of Hannah's search and evaluation confirmed Grill'd was the best choice. It met her intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Bloom and Colbert, 2011), three personality factors (Carveth, 2017), non-compensatory rules (Aribarg et al., 2018) and came recommended by her associative reference groups. Conformity (Bond, 2005), the consumer self-concept (Sirgy, 1982), and the value-expressive attitude (Keating, 2021) determine the final part of Hannah's decision-making process; the restaurant location.

4.1 Consumer Self-Concept

According to Sirgy (1982), there are three versions of the self; how we see ourselves (actual), the person we strive to be (ideal), and how we would like to be seen by others (social). In Hannah's case, these link specifically to her intrinsic motivations and non-negotiables (Bloom and Colbert, 2011) and form part of her decision to choose Grill'd. She is a vegan (actual) who aims to live a carbon-neutral life (ideal) and wants to be seen as someone who values quality food, the environment, and giving back to the community (social). Grill'd supports all three versions of Hannah's self-concept, thus satisfying her purchase decision. Hannah's self-concept versions would also be reinforced in her post-purchase behaviour after eating her chosen vegan burger with friends and putting a token in her preferred community donation jar (Grill'd-3, n.d.).

4.2 Conformity

Majority rules (Bond, 2005) is the role conformity plays in the purchase behaviour of deciding the restaurant location. Hannah's friends would be unlikely to object to choosing Grill'd, as the information she gathered during stage two of her decision-making process is sound and influential. Since Hannah was the main-decision maker, her primary needs have been met, and location is one of her compensatory rules, she would likely concede to peer pressure (Charness et al., 2019) and follow her friend's choice Grill'd locale, even if it meant travelling further. Conformity (Bond, 2005) and 'social connectedness' (Yang and Nguyen, 2021) indicate Hannah's

friends would have a similar social-self view (Mandel et al., 2017) or aspirations for their ideal self to be more like this. Yang and Nguyen (2021) suggest that the connectedness experienced by conforming to the friendship group feeds the post-purchase euphoria, reinforcing their decision and social standing as good citizens, creating a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1943).

4.3 Functional Theory: Value-Expressive Attitude

According to Keating (2021), when a marketing message aligns with something a consumer values, it serves the function of expressing their personality and intrinsic motivations (Bloom and Colbert, 2011). In stage one of the decision-making process, Hannah determined that multiple dietary options, sustainability, and a community focus were essential factors in choosing a restaurant to solve her hunger problem. These express her values of veganism, socialising with friends, contribution, and reducing her carbon footprint. Grill'd is congruent with these, further strengthening her argument for choosing this brand. Even if her friends have slightly different values, conforming to societies view of being a 'good person' (Charness et al., 2019) would tip the purchase decision towards Grill'd. The post-purchase behaviour would demonstrate that the group either were, or are aspiring to, value health, the environment, and supporting the local community. Prioritising these over the cost further reinforces their ideal and social selves and make them feel good (Sirgy, 1982).

5.0 Sustainability/Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Analysis

Environmentally aware consumers such as Hannah are looking to support businesses making a difference in their community and reducing environmental impact. Grill'd implements strong sustainability and community practices, as shown in Table 1.0. In her report, Coronado Robles (2020) outlines four ways businesses can align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set by the United Nations (UN) (United Nations, n.d.). Three of these apply to Grill'd; resource competition, climate change, and pollution (Coronado Robles, 2020), as indicated in Table 1.0 through renewable and sustainable products, recycling, energy-saving measures, sourcing local ingredients, and partnerships; meeting UN SDG twelve and thirteen (United Nations, n.d.).

Better communication of these and the Meat-free Monday and Tree-Day Tuesday initiatives (Grill'd-6, n.d.) in-restaurant would serve two purposes. First, it would promote

transparency, build trust, and minimise the disconnect between Grill'd and its stakeholders (Higgins et al., 2020). Second, it is a reminder that the consumer is 'doing good' by eating at Grill'd, reinforcing their ideal self (Sirgy, 1982), value-expressive attitude (Keating, 2021), and Maslow's (1943) self-actualisation need.

While Grill'd does much for the environment and community, Table 1.0 shows room for improvement. This is Coronado Robles (2020) fourth area, water scarcity, or UN SDG six (United Nations, n.d.). It is a significant opportunity for the brand to further align with its new slogan and potentially be an example for other restaurants to follow. Expanded CSR practices and better transparency would likely attract more consumers like Hannah. Their similar compensatory rules (Aribarg et al., 2018) mean they are willing and able to pay higher prices and travel further distances for healthy, sustainable options. Limited focus on the Grill'd staff and training is recommended unless it directly affects the consumer experience. Table 1.0 The Social Stakeholder Model Canvas for Grill'd

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Brand Sustainability	Employee	Social	value		Social Culture		Consumer Touch-points		
Elements ^(a) Better food choices - Australian sourced ingredients free from antibiotics, hormones, chemicals, and preservatives. Lower emission from 'beyond patty' production Recycling - cooking oil for biodiesel and restaurant finishes Sustainable packaging -paper 	 Employees feel good about supporting the environment and handing out tokens to support local charities, programs, and groups^(e) 774 staff have completed a hospitality Certification in 12 months^(d) 	and programs 2. Relish program can choose to Vinnies or take yourself ^(e) 3. Partner with N Red Cross, St J	oups, charities, (a) n - after 8 scans, donate a meal to e a free burger for NPO's - Vinnies, ohns, Movember, Surf Life Saving	2.	Culture of sustainability in business Culture of looking after the environment Not all calories are equal or empty; some can be nourishing	2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	 Emails to Relish members^(e) Billboard advertising^(f) Burger Vigilante character videos^(e) 		
 Sustainable packaging -paper and cardboard with a water- coated finish and plastic-free straws Energy-saving measures - lights dimming, energy meters and selected green power usage Themed days that promote sustainability 	Local Communities ^(a) 1. Local matters program 2. Tree-day Tuesdays – partnering with GreenFleet 3. Supports initiatives such as Movember, Polished Man, and Bushfire appeal	Scale of O Grill'd makes a size contribution throu sustainability and o support. No overse	gh business community	1. 2. 3. 4.	Improvements More transparency about all sustainability measures and community donations Customer-driven donations Food truck/pop-up restaurant Water-saving initiatives	8.			
Social Impacts Social benefits									
 New sustainability focus could Lack of sustainability transpare No consistency across restaurant 	 Fundraising events to support local communities and initiatives raises awareness of the cause Provides a healthy, sustainable food option that makes people feel good Lower emissions and reduced carbon footprint helps the environment Provides an example of how to incorporate sustainability into a restaurant 								
Table References (a) Grill'd-A. (n.d.). Healthy burgers. Healthy planet. Grill'd. Retrieved December 18, 2021 from https://www.grilld.com.au/about/sustainability (b) Melbourne Storm. (2021, April 13). Grill'd cooks up a footy storm. Melbourne Storm. Retrieved December 18, 2021 from https://www.melbournestorm.com.au/news/2021/04/13/grilld-cooks-up-a-footy-storm									

(c) Grill'd Burgers. (n.d.). [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved December 17, 2021 from https://m.facebook.com/GrilldBurgers/events

(d) Grill'd-B. (n.d.). Leadership achievements. Grill'd. Retrieved December 18, 2021 from https://www.grilld.com.au/careers/leadership-achievements

(e) Grill'd-C. (n.d.). Home. Grill'd. Retrieved December 18, 2021 from https://www.grilld.com.au

(f) B and T Magazine. (2020, November 17). Grill'd offers free healthy fried chicken to kfc employees in new campaign. Retrieved December 23, 2021 from https://www.bandt.com.au/grilldoffers-free-healthy-fried-chicken-to-kfc-employees-in-new-campaign

6.0 Marketing Strategy Recommendations

More transparency, water-saving measures, and pop-up restaurants are the recommendations based on consumer buying behaviour and the gaps identified.

6.1 Recommendation 1: More Transparency

Grill'd has a lot of eco-friendly initiatives in place (Grill'd-6, n.d.); however, most of these are only mentioned on the website, which consumers have to track down. Transparency is needed to fully align with the new focus on sustainability. This could be done in the restaurant by replacing the existing wall décor with a sustainability wall. The sustainability wall could display all the Grill'd store's initiatives and could include a 'meet the supplier' section, which changes monthly to showcase the Australian sourced ingredients. They could also have a board that displays the amount raised for the local matters program (Grill'd-3, n.d.), the number of meals donated through the Relish membership (Grill'd-5, n.d.), and the number of trees GreenFleet (Grill'd-6, n.d.) have planted on their behalf. These visual reminders would reinforce Hannah's buying decision-making process.

6.2 Recommendation 2: Water-Saving Measures

In her report, Coronado Robles (2020) listed water scarcity as a problem businesses can tackle to align with UN SDG six (United Nations, n.d.). There is no mention of any water-saving measures Grill'd restaurants have implemented. It is unclear whether this is because there have been none, or they just have not been listed. Grill'd must address this critical sustainability component for its environmentally aware consumers. Even though consumers are indirectly impacted by the Grill'd water usage, it would be an expected measure for a sustainable business (United Nations, n.d.). which could cost them market share if ignored. It could be as simple as installing water-saving devices on taps, having a half-flush toilet option, or using water-saving appliances such as dishwashers. The one-off outlay would save money and reduce water usage for the long term at each restaurant. Grill'd could also include this on the sustainability wall.

6.3 Recommendation 3: Pop-up restaurants

Figure 1.0 shows the Grill'd consumer as a social 20-30-year-old urbanite who loves listening to music. They are likely to attend music festivals, which are also becoming more sustainable. Each state could have its own food truck to attend various festivals and events as required. This is an opportunity to raise awareness with new consumers, promote Grill'd as a sustainability leader, sell branded merchandise, and provide better quality burger options to festival patrons that cater to multiple dietary requirements (Grill'd-4, n.d.). The biodiesel generated from the recycled cooking oil (Grill'd-6, n.d.) could potentially power the food trucks, further contributing to sustainability. The pop-up restaurant also fits Aaker's (1997) excitement brand personality identified in the brand audit.

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