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FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING UNDER CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR DURING A CRISIS

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БАЗОВІ ЗАСАДИ МАРКЕТИНГУ В УМОВАХ ЗМІНИ СПОЖИВЧОЇ ПОВЕДІНКИ НАСЕЛЕННЯ В ПЕРІОД КРИЗИ

The purpose of this study is to explore the fundamental principles of marketing in the context of changing consumer behavior during crises and to identify ways to adapt these principles to transformational processes driven by economic digitalization, growing uncertainty, and shifts in consumer values. The research indicates that contemporary crises have a significant impact on consumer behavior, as evidenced by increased price sensitivity, a shift toward essential goods and local brands, a greater reliance on digital communication channels, and a rising demand for transparency and corporate social responsibility. In such conditions, traditional marketing approaches lose their effectiveness, highlighting the need to reassess and update core marketing principles. Based on the findings, recommendations have been developed for a modern framework of marketing fundamentals that is effective in crisis conditions. These include a consumer-centric approach, flexible product and pricing strategies, digitalization of interaction channels, trust— and responsibility-driven communication, adaptive positioning, and predictive modeling of consumer

behavior — collectively forming the foundation of adaptive marketing. The study demonstrates that implementing these principles enables businesses to respond effectively to market changes, mitigate risks, and build sustainable consumer loyalty. Digitalization of marketing processes proves particularly crucial during crisis-driven transformations, providing opportunities for in-depth analysis, modeling, and forecasting of consumer behavior. Tools such as digital analytics, artificial intelligence, and big data provide a foundation for scientifically grounded consumer decision-making models, thereby enhancing both forecasting accuracy and managerial flexibility. Therefore, modern marketing in times of crisis must integrate analytical, predictive, and strategic approaches to establish an adaptive model of consumer behavior. This not only helps maintain business competitiveness but also fosters trust, transparency, and social responsibility as fundamental values in consumer engagement.

Мета дослідження полягає у дослідженні фундаментальних принципів маркетингу в контексті зміни поведінки споживачів під час криз та визначенні шляхів адаптації цих принципів до трансформаційних процесів, зумовлених економічною цифровізацією, висхідною невизначеністю та змінами у споживчих цінностях. Дослідження показує, що сучасні кризи суттєво змінюють поведінку споживачів, про що свідчить підвищена чутливість до цін, зміщення до товарів першої потреби та місцевих брендів, більша залежність від цифрових каналів комунікації та зростання попиту на прозорість та корпоративну соціальну відповідальність. У таких умовах традиційні маркетингові підходи втрачають ефективність, відтак потрібний перегляд та оновлення базових засад маркетингу. За результатами дослідження сформульовано рекомендації щодо базових засад маркетингу, які виявляються ефективними в умовах кризи. Серед них: орієнтація на споживача; гнучкість продуктово-цінової політики; цифровізація каналів взаємодії; комунікація довіри та соціальної відповідальності; адаптивне позиціонування та прогнозування поведінки споживачів. Дослідження доводить, що застосування цих засад дозволяє бізнес-суб'єктам ефективно реагувати на зміни ринкового середовища, знижувати ризики та формувати стійкі моделі лояльності споживачів. Також констатовано, що особливої ваги в умовах кризових трансформацій набуває цифровізація маркетингових процесів, що забезпечує можливість глибокого аналізу, моделювання та прогнозування споживчої поведінки. Цифрові аналітичні інструменти, штучний інтелект та великі дані створюють основу для побудови науково обгрунтованих моделей прийняття споживчих рішень, що підвищує точність прогнозів і гнучкість управлінських рішень. Отже, сучасний маркетинг у період кризових викликів має інтегрувати аналітичний, прогностичний і стратегічний аспекти, що забезпечують формування адаптивної моделі споживчої поведінки. Це дозволяє не лише зберігати конкурентоспроможність бізнесу, але й формувати довіру, прозорість і соціальну відповідальність як фундаментальні цінності взаємодії зі споживачем.

Key words: consumer orientation; consumer decision-making; marketing; marketing approaches; consumer behavior modeling.

Ключові слова: орієнтація на споживача; прийняття споживчих рішень; маркетинг; маркетингові підходи; моделювання споживчої поведінки.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Contemporary crises significantly affect the dynamics and structure of consumer behavior, as confirmed by numerous empirical and theoretical studies in behavioral economics and marketing (notably How Consumers Behave in a Crisis: International Lessons (and Innovations) from COVID 19 by Stacy Wood, 2022, among others). Under conditions of heightened uncertainty and limited resources, a key task for marketing is to adapt its fundamental principles to transformational changes in consumer behavior. At the same time, the digitalization of economic processes opens up new opportunities for more in-depth analysis, forecasting, and modeling of consumer decision-

making based on big data, artificial intelligence, and analytical platforms.

Modeling consumer behavior in the digital environment has gained particular significance, as it enables the identification of hidden patterns in decision-making, tracking changes in value orientations, and responding swiftly to fluctuations in market conditions. In this context, the integration of digital tools into the marketing management system becomes especially relevant, allowing for the development of scientifically grounded models of consumer behavior during periods of crisis.

Thus, the scholarly understanding of the digitalization of consumer behavior modeling is an important prerequisite

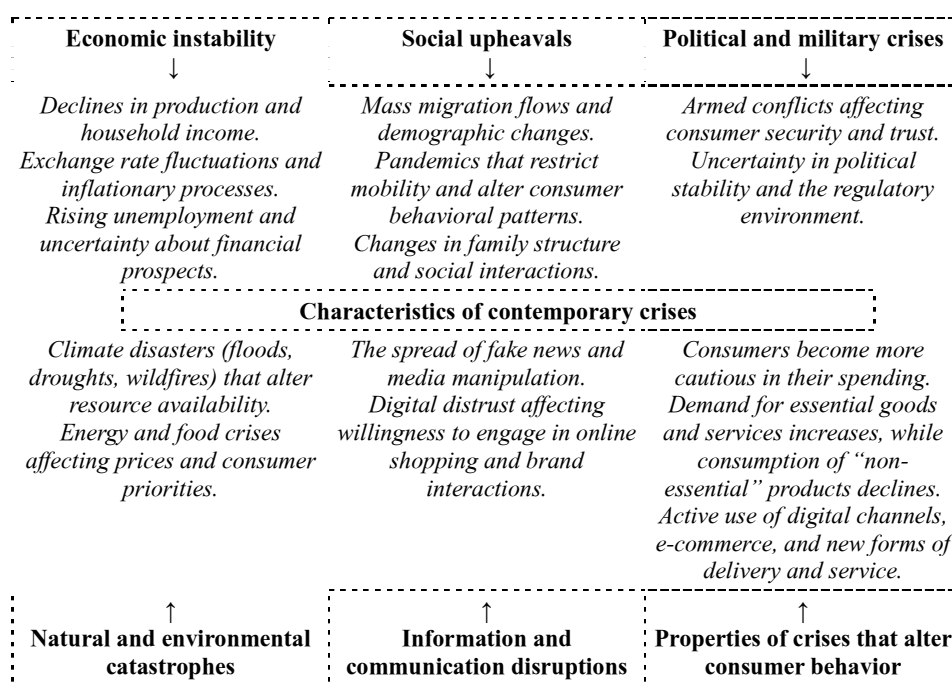


Figure 1. Characteristics of contemporary crises affecting consumer behavior

Source: created by the authors based on [1; 3—4; 6].

for updating the fundamental principles of marketing. It enhances the effectiveness of marketing strategies and enables the development of an adaptive system for managing consumer demand, capable of responding to dynamic changes in the socio-economic environment.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Some aspects of marketing under conditions of changing consumer behavior have been studied by Kosar N., Mamchin M., Baran A. [3], Bochko O.Yu., Kozhushok N. [2], and Semenda O. [5]. In particular, these scholars have noted that contemporary trends in consumer behavior necessitate the reorientation of corporate marketing strategies toward more flexible, customer-centric, and digital models of interaction with consumers.

Furthermore, Raiko D. [6], Kartajaya H., Kotler P., and Hooi D. H. [4] have described how shifts in values, the growing role of social media, the development of e-commerce, and increasing demands for service quality influence the formation of new approaches to promoting goods and services.

At the same time, comprehensive principles of marketing in the context of transforming consumer behavior under the influence of crises remain insufficiently studied. This leads to several key challenges:

- Empirical strategies. In the absence of comprehensive, scientifically grounded models, companies are forced to rely on their own experience, which increases the risk of errors in planning marketing activities.

- Lagging digitalization. Businesses risk falling behind in the use of digital channels, data analytics, and innovative technologies for consumer engagement.

- Imperfect forecasting. The lack of a systematic approach creates gaps in demand forecasting, pricing, and new product development.

This set of challenges underscores the need for further scholarly substantiation of principles, models, and mechanisms for adapting marketing strategies to the new realities of the digital economy.

FORMULATION OF THE ARTICLE'S OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to explore the fundamental principles of marketing in the context of changing consumer behavior during crises and to identify ways to adapt these principles to transformational processes driven by economic digitalization, growing uncertainty, and shifts in consumer values.

THE PAPER MAIN BODY

Within the scope of the present study, attention is drawn to the fact that contemporary crises—such as economic downturns, inflationary processes, pandemics, armed conflicts, energy and food crises, climate catastrophes, mass migration flows, as well as information and communication disruptions (associated with the spread of fake news and digital distrust)—due to their inherent characteristics (see Figure 1), produce changes in consumer behavior through several specific features [3-4].

Firstly, a crisis alters the structure of consumer priorities: the share of spending on essential goods (such as food, energy, and healthcare) increases, while demand for durable goods, entertainment, or luxury products declines. For instance, according to the Household Budget Survey — Statistics on Consumption Expenditure and Deloitte reports, during the crisis periods of 2020—2022, over 60% of households in EU countries adjusted their spending patterns, prioritizing essential goods.

Secondly, decision-making patterns change: consumers increasingly rely on rational, economically balanced

choices, and the influence of trust, safety, and brand stability factors becomes more pronounced. Behavioral models show a growing role of cognitive caution and risk aversion. This is supported by the works of Kartajaya H., Kotler P., Hooi D. H., who emphasize that under conditions of instability, consumer motives shift from emotional to functional considerations [4].

Thirdly, crises stimulate the digital transformation of consumer interaction channels. According to McKinsey (2023), during periods of economic and social upheaval, digital channels (online marketplaces, mobile applications, social media) became the primary environment for communication between brands and consumers. This has prompted a reorientation of marketing strategies toward digital behavior modeling, personalized offerings, and data analytics.

Thus, crisis processes do not merely shape new patterns of consumer behavior. The instability of the socio-economic environment, market fragmentation, and the growth of digital interactions require fundamentally new approaches from businesses in developing marketing models. This need arises from a series of important changes in consumer behavior models.

One of the most notable transformations in this area is the increase in online shopping and digital interaction. This process is objective, as during crises traditional sales channels become less accessible or carry higher risks, prompting consumers to turn to online services, mobile applications, marketplaces, and social platforms.

The intensity of these changes is amplified by the systematic convergence of several behavioral adaptation triggers, among which the need for convenience, safety, and speed of purchase plays a key role, along with the development of logistical solutions (notably door-to-door delivery [4]), the spread of digital payment systems, and the active digitalization of the business sector. As a result, brands build their image and consumer trust primarily in the online environment, where communication occurs in real time.

For example, research on consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that in 2020-2021, the share of online purchases in the FMCG segment increased by 35—40%, while user activity in mobile applications and marketplaces grew by an average of 50%. This indicates that the presence of comprehensive behavioral adaptation triggers directly influences the choice of purchasing channels, and brands that promptly integrated digital tools into their marketing activities were able not only to retain but also to expand their customer base.

Another characteristic feature of consumer behavior under crisis conditions is increased price sensitivity. It manifests in consumers' efforts to minimize expenses, reflected in actively comparing price offers from different sellers, seeking promotions, discounts, alternative products, or cheaper brands [1-2]. Under the influence of crisis factors—such as inflation, reduced income, devaluation processes, and uncertainty about future earnings—consumers shift toward more rational decision-making models, in which price becomes the determining factor, while impulsiveness and brand loyalty decline. The shift in the structure of consumer choices toward so-called price optimization is driven by a set of behavioral triggers

that reflect the population's adaptation to economic uncertainty.

For example, according to NielsenIQ (2023), over 78% of Ukrainian consumers in 2022—2023 switched from their usual brands to more affordable alternatives and actively took advantage of promotional offers in supermarkets and marketplaces. These changes were directly driven by Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, inflationary pressures, and the devaluation of the national currency. A similar trend is observed in EU countries. According to the McKinsey Global Consumer Sentiment report (2022), over 60% of respondents indicated that during periods of inflation, economic instability, and rising prices of essential goods, they consciously chose mid-priced products instead of premium options.

These transformations affect the content of companies' marketing activities, as they drive a shift toward a price-flexibility strategy. This strategy involves the active use of dynamic pricing mechanisms, targeted discounts, personalized offers, and loyalty programs aimed at retaining customers under conditions of constrained purchasing power [2—3].

A significant trend in consumer behavior during crises is the shift toward local brands. This tendency is supported by a combination of economic and psychological factors. On the one hand, there is a growing desire to support national producers, local businesses, and the domestic economy, which can be seen as an expression of consumer patriotism [5—6]. On the other hand, local brands typically feature shorter logistics chains, more stable supply, and lower risks of disruptions and price fluctuations, which fosters higher levels of trust and loyalty among consumers [5]. For example, during the economic and military crisis in Ukraine, the popularity of local food producers increased, including brands such as Nasha Ryaba, Rud, and Yahotynske, which provide a more stable supply and reliable quality. In the clothing and household goods sector, consumers favor Ukrainian brands such as VOVK or Ksenia Schnaider, which carry lower logistical risks and support the local economy. Similarly, in EU countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, the popularity of local food and everyday product manufacturers also increased due to shorter supply chains and price stability.

Together, these changes necessitate a rethinking of corporate marketing, which increasingly takes on a regionally oriented character—where communication emphasizing national identity, cultural traditions, and shared values plays a key role—and a socially responsible character, in which brands demonstrate support for social initiatives, volunteer programs, or local production. In effect, marketing during crisis periods transforms toward a model of "local trust," where the key competitive advantage is not the scale of the brand, but its proximity to consumers, its ability to share community values, and its capacity to respond quickly to changes in the socio-economic context.

In effect, the synthesis of these changes transforms corporate marketing systems, particularly through:

1. Emphasis on regional brand identity, with communication that incorporates national symbols, local cultural codes, and socially responsible messages.

2. Strengthening the role of storytelling and reputation marketing, aimed at creating an emotional connection between the brand and the consumer.

Table 1. Fundamental principles of marketing under changing consumer behavior during a crisis

Fundamental principles of marketing	How to apply the fundamental principles of marketing in practice	Components of the significance of marketing principles in a crisis
1. Consumer orientation and behavior analysis	Use Big Data, CRM, and social media to analyze changes in consumer patterns; conduct surveys and focus groups.	Rapid changes in consumer priorities require accurate data for effective strategies.
2. Flexibility of product assortment and pricing policy.	Review product assortment (focus on essential goods); implement promotions, discounts, and flexible pricing.	During a crisis, consumers focus on saving money but still expect quality and reliability.
3. Digitalization of interaction channels.	Online marketing, social media, mobile applications; analyze online consumer behavior.	Increase in online shopping and digital interactions; convenience and safety for consumers.
4. Communication of trust and social responsibility.	Online marketing, social media, mobile applications; analyze online consumer behavior.	Growing demand for transparency, reliability, and social responsibility of brands.
5. Positioning and adaptive communication.	Adjust advertising messages and promotions; focus on local markets.	Rapid changes in demand and behavioral patterns require flexible communication strategies.
6. Forecasting and modeling of consumer behavior.	Use digital modeling, artificial intelligence, and analytical platforms for demand forecasting; conduct scenario planning.	Enables data-driven decision-making, minimizing risks in crisis conditions.

Source: created by the authors based on [1—2; 5—6].

3. Integration of sustainable development and local authenticity concepts, demonstrating transparency in business processes, environmentally friendly production, and contributions to the development of local communities.

As a result, marketing in crisis conditions acquires a value-oriented and socially responsible character, while local brands gain a strategic competitive advantage through a combination of consumer proximity, flexibility in responding to market changes, and emotional identification with their audience.

Under the influence of these factors, a structural shift in consumer preferences is observed, with local products gradually replacing imported alternatives, particularly in categories such as food, clothing, cosmetics, and household goods. This trend is driven by a combination of behavioral and economic adaptation triggers, including the pattern of economic patriotism (which fosters a desire to support national producers), lower logistical risks (reducing dependence on imported supplies), emotional closeness and trust (as local brands better understand cultural nuances and consumer needs), and greater price competitiveness (due to the absence of import costs, customs duties, and currency risks) [5].

For example, in 2022—2023, the share of sales of Ukrainian food products in supermarkets increased by 12—15% (according to Kantar Ukraine). These changes were driven by Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and a series of related cascading crisis effects, including disruptions in import supplies, rising food prices, national

currency devaluation, and reduced household incomes, which prompted consumers to reorient toward local brands.

Regarding the decline in loyalty to "traditional" products and brands, it should be noted that under crisis conditions, consumers are compelled to reconsider their habits and seek cheaper or more functional alternatives, leading to reduced loyalty to "traditional" brands. This trend is driven by several behavioral triggers, including: the price factor, which begins to outweigh emotional considerations; decreased trust in large corporations that fail to demonstrate social responsibility or adapt prices; and the emergence of new niche brands with flexible digital strategies. For instance, according to Deloitte (2022), 47% of consumers in Central Europe switched at least one habitual brand (to a cheaper or private-label alternative) for economic reasons.

Regarding the increasing demand for transparency, reliability, and corporate social responsibility, it should be noted that during periods of crisis, social tension rises, and people seek trust—not only in the state but also in businesses. This trend is driven by several behavioral and economic adaptation triggers (see Table 3), including:

- Increased focus on business ethics, particularly concerning product origin, production conditions, and environmental sustainability.

- The importance of informational transparency, which can serve as a competitive advantage, as consumers often verify companies online, read reviews, and seek evidence of integrity.

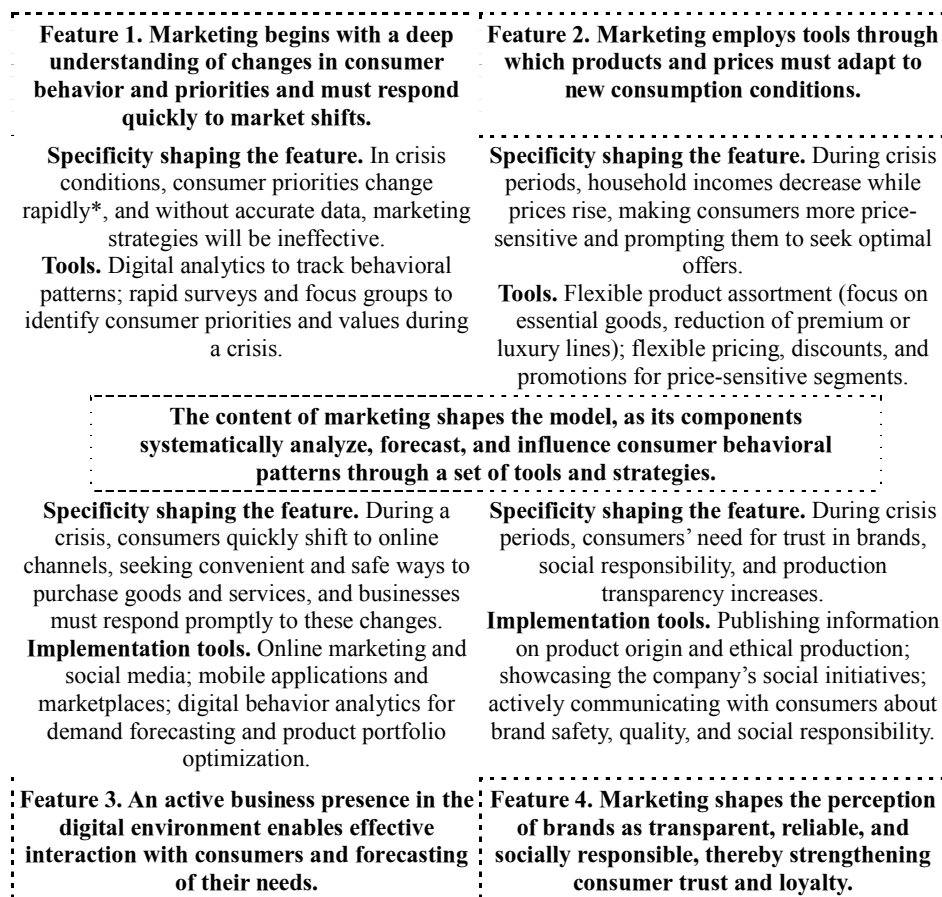


Figure 2. Marketing model under changing consumer behavior during a crisis

Note: / *Increase in essential expenditures, price sensitivity, local orientation.

Source: created by the authors based on [2—3; 5]

— The rise of brands with a social mission, such as support for the military, environmental initiatives, and community assistance, which builds trust and loyalty, even during crises.

For instance, a McKinsey report from 2023 reveals that 62% of European consumers are inclined to support brands that uphold a transparent social stance during times of war.

In fact, under conditions of heightened uncertainty, consumers exhibit increased price sensitivity, a reorientation toward essential goods and local brands, more active use of digital channels for shopping and communication, and greater expectations of transparency, reliability, and social responsibility from companies. In response to these transformations, marketing strategies should be based on the fundamental principles of adaptive marketing, which include (see Table 1): consumer orientation and behavior analysis, flexibility in product assortment and pricing policies, digitalization of interaction channels, communication of trust and social responsibility, adaptive positioning, and forecasting consumer behavior models.

It should be noted that applying the aforementioned principles enables business entities to respond effectively to rapid market changes, develop new patterns of consumer loyalty, and ensure sustainable business growth even during crisis periods. In fact, this forms the foundation of adaptive marketing, because:

— Marketing begins with a deep understanding of changes in consumer behavior and priorities and must respond quickly to market shifts.

— Marketing utilizes tools that allow products and pricing to adjust to changing consumer conditions.

— Marketing focuses on an active presence of the business in the digital environment, allowing effective interaction with consumers.

— Marketing shapes perceptions of brands as transparent, reliable, and socially responsible, thereby strengthening consumer trust and loyalty.

When considering the content of marketing in the context of shaping consumer behavior models, its key task lies in the systematic analysis, forecasting, and influence on consumer behavioral patterns through a set of tools and strategies (see Figure 2).

So, the analytical aspect of marketing involves studying consumer needs and forming a model of their behavior based on data about purchasing habits, price sensitivity, and brand loyalty. This is made possible through digital analytics, surveys, focus groups, and social media.

The predictive aspect of marketing lies in constructing scenarios of consumer behavior and modeling potential changes in demand. This can be achieved through scenario planning.

The strategic aspect involves adapting products and pricing policies according to current consumer needs. This is possible through active business digitalization, which

ensures effective digital interaction with consumers and rapid response to changes in demand.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research demonstrates that contemporary crises have a significant impact on consumer behavior, manifested in increased price sensitivity, a shift toward basic goods and local brands, a growing role for digital communication channels, and a rising demand for transparency and corporate social responsibility. Under such conditions, traditional marketing approaches lose their effectiveness, necessitating a review and update of the fundamental marketing principles.

Based on the research findings, recommendations have been developed for a modern system of marketing fundamentals that is effective during crises. These include consumer orientation, flexibility in product and pricing policies, digitalization of interaction channels, trust-based and socially responsible communication, adaptive positioning, and consumer behavior forecasting-forming the foundation of adaptive marketing. It has been demonstrated that implementing these principles enables businesses to respond effectively to market changes, reduce risks, and develop sustainable models of consumer loyalty.

Digitalization of marketing processes gains particular importance during crisis-driven transformations, as it provides opportunities for in-depth analysis, modeling, and forecasting of consumer behavior. Digital analytics tools, artificial intelligence, and big data create a basis for scientifically grounded models of consumer decision-making, enhancing the accuracy of forecasts and the flexibility of managerial decisions.

Thus, modern marketing in times of crisis must integrate analytical, predictive, and strategic aspects to form an adaptive model of consumer behavior. This approach not only preserves business competitiveness but also fosters trust, transparency, and social responsibility as core values in consumer interactions.

Promising directions for further research include a deeper study of the impact of digital technologies on consumer behavior models during market crises and identifying the most effective approaches to developing strategies for integrating social responsibility and transparency into marketing practices.

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