
PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
A CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

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INTRODUCTION:

Consumer behaviour is a science as well as art. Consumer behaviour is an interdisciplinary and is based on concepts and theories. Consumer behaviour is a very new field, as it grows, it is influenced by many different perspectives. It has borrowed heavily from psychology (the study of the individual: individual determinants in buying behaviour), sociology (the study of groups: group dynamics in buying behaviour), social psychology (the study of how an individual operates in group/groups and its effects on buying behaviour), anthropology (the influence of society on the individual: cultural and cross-cultural issues in buying behaviour), and economics (income and purchasing power).

Normally, we go buying and consuming variety of goods and services. The needs and attitudes of the customers and their buying behaviour differently depend upon the factors like, their income, location, sex, social status, tastes, likes and dislikes, psychology etc. and each consumer is unique and his unique is easily reflected in his consumption behaviour and pattern, and also process of purchase. In this paper, I have made an attempt to trace the study of psychological aspects of consumer's behaviour.

The present study has made an attempt to study the behaviour of personal consumers. Understanding the consumer behaviour is not an easy job because of the complexity involved. It also study has made an attempt to study the behaviour of personal consumer.

Nature and Importance of Consumers Behaviour:

An understanding of the reasons why a consumer buy a particular product or at a certain stage is critical. However, if the marketer fails to make an appeal to the right motives of the consumer. He will probably loose the sale. An understanding of the buying behaviour of various market segments helps a seller to select the most effective product, design, price, and appeals in advertising, channels of distribution and other marketing programmes.

The knowledge of consumer's behaviour is also helpful in understanding the purchase behaviour and preferences of different consumers. In this context, we can differentiate the consumer in terms of sex, age, education, occupation, income, family set up, religion, nationality, and social status etc. Here it should be made clear that the terms consumer and customer (buyer) cannot be used synonymously. Both these terms consumer quite different in the sense. The customer may or may not buy things for their own consumption, but the consumer purchase the goods exclusively for the purpose of

Hence, it can be said that customers (buyers) are not always consumers and consumers are not always customers.

Objectives of Research:

- To study the psychological factors influencing consumer behaviour.

Methodology of research:

The entire research is based upon secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from the various published data.

Findings:**PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS DETERMINING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR:**

There are four important psychological factors affecting the consumer's behaviour. These are: perception, motivation, learning, beliefs and attitudes. An individual's buying decisions are further influenced by psychological factors: perception, motivation, learning and attitudes. With this consumers use to interact with their world and consumers use to recognize their feelings, gather and analyse information, formulate thoughts and opinions and take action.

The consumer buying behaviour is influenced by four major psychological factors - motivation, perception, learning and beliefs and attitudes.

A. Motivation :

Motivation refers to the processes that cause people to behave as they do. From a psychological perspective motivation occurs when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy.

Motivation is directly related to the need. It can be described as an "energising force" (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010) Motivation is a stimulated need which, a goal oriented individual seeks to satisfy. Motivational process can affects direct man's buying and consuming activities also. A consumer buys a particular product because he is influenced by certain motives.

Motivation is the driving source of behaviour. Motivation is the driving source of behaviour. "The basic motives need to be satisfied before other motives are activated" and finally "when the basic motives are satisfied even more advanced motives can take place". (Maslow, 1970)

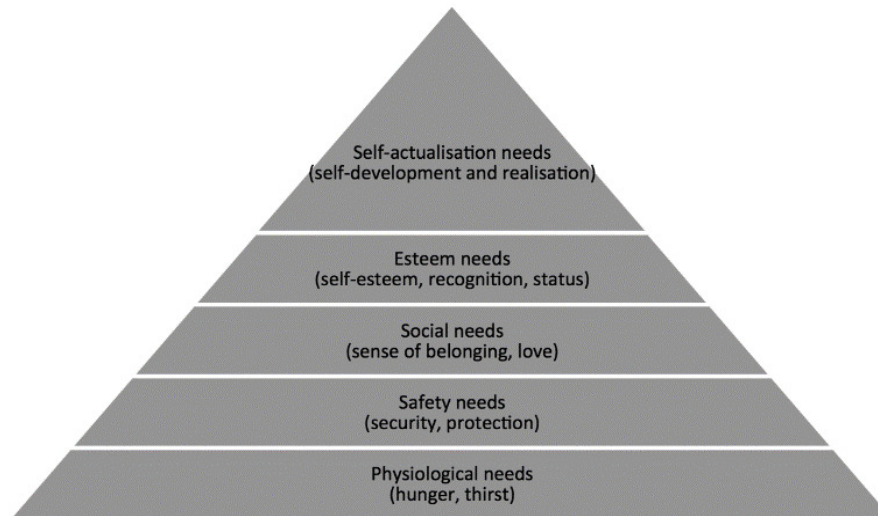
TABLE 1.

McGuire's Psychological Motives (Adapted from Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010)

| Cognitive Preservation Motives | Cognitive Growth Motives: |
|--|---|
| Need for consistency (active, internal) | Need for Autonomy (active, internal) |
| Need for attribution (active, external) | Need for Stimulation (active, external) |
| Need to Categorize (passive, internal) | Teleological Need (passive, internal) |
| Need for Objectification (passive, External) | Utilitarian Need (passive, external) |

On every day of our life we go on meeting our needs by consuming different goods and services. When a need is sufficiently pressing, it directs a person to seek its satisfaction. It is known as motive.

E.g. when one gets thirsty he needs water to satisfy his thirst. In this example 'thirst' is the motive of the concerned. Motive is a strong feeling, urge, instinct, desire, or emotion. In the above example, entertainment passing time Radio is the motivational desire and to drink water is motivational instinct. This makes the buyer to react in the form of a decision to buy or drink water. Thus we can say that every human activity is motivated and not spontaneous. Shri. A. H. Maslow has formulated a useful theory of motivation known as "Holistic dynamic" Theory. He has classified the needs and placed them in the order in which a person seeks to gratify them. For more clarification Maslow's hierarchy of needs are:



GRAPH 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Adapted from Maslow, 1970)

Graph 1, demonstrates the hierarchy briefly and describes each level from the most basic Physiological needs to the more advanced Psychological needs.

The implication of Maslow's hierarchy is that one must first satisfy basic needs before progressing up the ladder.

Another example would be gardening that has been found to satisfy needs at every level of the hierarchy:

- Physiological: 'I like to work in the soil.'
- Safety: 'I feel safe in the garden.'
- Social: 'I can share my produce with others.'
- Esteem: 'I can create something of beauty.'
- Self-actualization: 'My garden gives me a sense of peace.'

According to Maslow, satisfaction proceeds through each of five stages when one need is satisfied the customer will seek higher goal and thus proceed up the hierarchy. In this situation the consumers are always the goal seekers who gratify their needs by purchase and consumption. Thus motivation is the underlying force of any human activity, not to mention buying alone. It is the desire which intimate the sequence of events known as behaviour. Motives, thus simply stated, correspond to needs a fundamental determinant of demand. It is the function of marketers to know the nature of the consumer's motivation and to make an attempt to satisfy them.

Each individual recognizes a given stimulus within his own frame of needs, values, and expectations.

B) Perceptions:

A group of psychologists in the late 1800's and early 1900's Germany were the first to study the organisation of perception. The psychologists that had the most influence were: Johann Wolfgang, von Goethe, Ernst Mach, von Ehrenfels, Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, Kurt Koffka, and Kurt Lewin.

Perception is "how we see the world around us".

Perception it is the process of selecting, organizing and interpreting information contributions to produce meaning.

- i) Generally, consumer tend to perceive the quality of perfumes on the basis of its package, brand name, price, and manufactures image.

ii) A child perceives a colour T.V.set as a source of pleasurable entertainment, mother view s it as a baby sitter ,a source of information is for a teacher ,father may view it as an over priced luxury and to the retailer, it just another product.

Market cannot afford unlimited advertising exposure. But he would like to insure that the stimuli which he is providing are not ignored by the consumer's memory. In this context, it is essential to consider the aspects of perception which are of immediate interest to the marketers.

C) Learning:

Learning is through action. When we act, we learn. It implies a change in the behaviour resulting from the experience. The learning changes the behaviour of an individual as he acquires information and experience.

It affects direct and indirect experiences on future behaviour. Learning is a measurable and relatively permanent change in behaviour through experience, instruction, or study. The stimulus response model is an explanation of the learning process .A marketer should know, accordingly, that a consumer can be made to learn, the desired behaviour through interplay of motives, clue, responses and reinforcements. A motive requires a response but the clues determine the pattern of this response which can be said as when where and how of the behaviour.

Examples:

A lecturer has the need for cutting down the time which he usually spends on the way from home to college daily. When this need is stronger enough to propel him to take action it becomes a motive. The motive is directed towards the stimulus object a scooter or motor cycle. The stimuli are the various advertisements about the product which he saw in the magazine, road hording or hears on the radio or T.V. clues are minor stimuli that determine when, where and how the lecturer responds. Positive feedback about the scooter/motor cycle from a friend, seeing it on the display in a show-window, special introductory price offer, financial assistance (loan) facility are all the examples of clues which will influence the lecture to motivate for buying a scooter.

Suppose he buys a scooter of a particular brand (Hero-Bajaj auto) and is satisfied with its performance then further chances are that he would like to use the some often and in the future he will buy another one. The lecturer's response to the brand scooter has been re enforced. After few days of this experience for the same. Since, he had positive experience with brand, Bajaj he may enter that the company manufacturing also makes good electrical iron and select it over the other brands. This is known generation of response.

Learning refers to the skill and knowledge gained from past experience which we apply to evaluate future decisions and situations. A marketer can build up demand for his brand buy associating it with strong motive, using the appropriate, stimuli and clues and providing positive reinforcement for making the consumer "Learn" that the brand is good.

Attitudes and Beliefs:

Attitude can be defined as a feeling, an assessment of an object or idea and the predisposition to act in a certain way towards that object. Attitudes allow the individual to develop a coherent behaviour against a class of similar objects or ideas.

Attitudes are made up of three components: beliefs, affect and behavioural intentions. Attitude is a person's point of view toward something. The "something" may be a product, an advertisement, a sales person, a firm, or an idea. Attitude and beliefs are strong and direct forces affecting consumer's perceptions and buying behaviour. It is a predisposition to feel or act in a given manner towards a specific person, group, object, institution or idea. They significantly influence a person's perception by relatively screening out in any

exposure of stimuli which conflicts with his attitudes. Attitudes, also can distort the perception of messages and effects degree of their retention. A preference for a particular brand it indicates the customer's attitude.

Belief:

Belief is a conviction that an individual has on something. Through the experience he acquires, his learning and his external influences (family, friends, etc.), he will develop beliefs that will influence his buying behaviour.

Beliefs are not so action-oriented. Belief is a person's opinion about something. Belief is a conviction that an individual has on something. Beliefs may categorize as knowledge, opinion, or faith depending upon their verifiability. A business's main aim is to influence consumers without directly changing their beliefs and behaviour. (Adaval, 2003).

Example:

If we believe that drinking milk is good for a growing child and the same, he knows on the basis of evidence then, our beliefs has been verified by personal experience or by outside source of research.

An opinion is a belief which has not yet been verified. Faith is a belief which is unverifiable. The belief may be based on some real facts or it may merely be a notion or opinion that a person has. Consumer's belief about a particular brand is important because it determines his behaviour towards buying and using it. The marketer must ensure that the customers have relevant and correct information about the brand to facilitate the formation of a positive image of brand.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to explore the different aspects of consumer behaviour through a psychological magnifying glass. A study on consumer behaviour goes far beyond the facets of consumer behaviour .It encompasses the consumers' behaviour which displayed in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services so that they will satisfy their needs.

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