

# Buyer behavior

Psychology, Behaviorism



Consumer behaviour is commonly described as the study of the factors that determine purchase of consumer goods. The analysis of such factors attempts to find out why, when, where, how and what individual do or don't to purchase certain goods. Generally it is very difficult to evaluate how people come to make certain decision though peripherally it appears to be obvious. For this reason, researchers have affirmed that there are several elements that play part in the overall buyer behaviour and cover a variety of subjects including sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics among others.

The customer needs and requirements are the central determinant of the purchase of goods, however with the current development in technology (communication and diversity of production), people have a variety of choices to pick from and for one to be able to win customers, he/she should produce the products that meet the specific customer demands, affordable and are convenient. Manipulating the customers psychology can be of great impact on the business as one can perceive what the customers want and design exactly that and therefore win a lot of customers.

**Buyer Decision Making** The marketers are usually faced with great problem when designing the most appropriate promotion strategy to win customers to their businesses. This calls for research to find out the consumer behaviour so that market planning can be properly design (Klopper et al 2006), Unilever for instance, have constantly used its logo on all the goods because the reputation of the company is well known and intimately associated with the logo.

The decision making process of the customers is the main focus because this is what determines whether the customer will purchase the product or not (Dibb & Simkin 2001). It also assists to design the marketing plan. Marketing is a very important aspect of business venture since the main aim of any business is to make profits. The process of planning and implementing the concept of price, promotion and supply of products and services is very complex and requires a plan; market planning.

Marketers use a variety of means to describe how, when and where information on a product is presented to the customer. The purpose is to convince the customer to purchase the product and successful market plan creates the wish to buy hence the marketer needs to understand the likes, dislikes and expectations of consumers (Shaw & Semenik 1999). Market plan assess the customers in terms of demographic variables and behavioural changeable aspects.

Research from previous has indicated that the consumer purchase behaviours are usually predisposed by the following factors; personal, psychological, cultural and social factors. It has been found that the interaction of these factors influence the customers to develop certain characteristic behaviour like brand preference or productloyalty. These factors are therefore very important for the marketers because they can use them to manipulate clients and end up with a lot of customers coming for their products or services.

Though most of the factors cannot be directly manipulated by the marketers, understanding of the buyer decision process and the impact of these factors on the customers can be very beneficial in developing a marketing mix for <https://assignbuster.com/buyer-behavior/>

their business and designed to appeal to the preferences of the target clients (Dibb & Simkin 2001). It has been established that before the purchase of a product or service, a customer goes through a process of making a decision.

For easy understanding and analysis of the process of decision making, the process has been categorized into five stages; recognizing the problem, looking for other information, analysis of alternatives or substitutes, the actual buying decision and post buying behaviour (Shaw & Semenik 1999). The duration of the decision making process always very depending on personality and this range is described from the routinely buying practice to some degree of problem solving and more wide-ranging and far-reaching problem solving dealing.

Due to interaction and the increase in communication technology, consumers get to exchange information and also get a variety of data from different sources which mean there is a lot of external influence on the decision one makes. For these reason, people do not act in seclusion in the buying process rather, their decision id influenced by several factors and people in the environment. The amount of influence gets complicated in the buying decision when a lot of people get involved and hence does the purchase decision by the customer (Howard & Sheth 1999).

The decision to purchase and the actual purchase is powerfully controlled by the cultural, social, psychological and personal distinctiveness. These factors can be blended and used by a marketer to create the correct appeal for the customers. The decision making process can hence be interfered with at different levels and the outcome could be that the customer gets to by the product without too much complexity (Shaw & Semenik 1999) Problem

Identification: this is the difference between the perceived ideal desire for something and the actual situation of having to obtain the product.

If the difference is greater enough, it is likely to evoke purchase of the product and this is described as the deficit in assortment of goods. For instance, a feeling of hunger is likely to inspire purchase of food because hunger can stimulate someone to eat. In this way, a company like Unilever can utilize this first step and stimulate purchase by an advert that creates the idea that a customer is deficient, like the need to be beautiful using the Dove beauty products. This can inspire one to purchase Dove as the ads usually use a model.

Search of Information: this is a way of obtaining information about the product about to be purchased and it is usually done in two ways i. e. internal search and external search. The internal search is when somebody relies on memory to remember past encounter with the product or the brand; this is usually used for regularly purchased goods and services. The external search is also a source of influence as one gets the information from friends and relatives, public sources like adverts, consumer reports, comparison during shopping etc.

When a marketer clearly understands the importance of this stage in the purchase decision, he or she can present a lot of information (marketer dominated) in items like adverts, salesmen, website among others (Dibb & Simkin 2001). If Unilever uses several adverts that will capture the customer's eye, it is likely to be remembered during this stage of decision making and leads to a positive response when one has to buy Dove beauty

products. Analysis of Substitutes (alternatives): this is the stage when the customer gets to set the criteria for buying.

Under correct understanding of the decision making process, marketer can be able to establish brand name reputation and these brand name could easily fall in the clients criteria (Klopper et al 2006). Another important aspect here is to develop and win the customer worth notion. Unilever logo is very popular and since the reputation of the company is well established, it can form a very good basis for marketing against competitors like Lux, Lava and Ivory.

The Buying Decision: a purchase decision is very critical to both the marketer and the client especially where to buy and is usually based on term of sale, previous knowledge of the product from the seller and return policy. When to purchase can be determined by appropriateness of the shop, store atmosphere and the time factor (Howard & Sheth 1999). Other factors in consideration when marketing include the product type, mode of packaging, and the means of purchase (online or physical etc).

The Actual Buying: this can be altered by product availability and therefore, for a company to win customers over there competitors, they should ensure that the products are always in the stores (Klopper et al 2006). Post Purchase Analysis: after acquiring the product, customers usually make comparisons of the actual effects and the expected outcome. From these, the product can be concluded as being satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Many companies are working very hard to ensure positive post purchase impact which will result in repeat purchase (Howard & Sheth 1999).

Unilever can use follow up calls and sales people to convince the clients that they made the correct decision. This will help to manage the cognitive dissonance that is usually experienced and is characterized by tense moments and feeling of anxiety. Consumer Behaviour Theories Consumer behaviour theories are attempts to give explanations as to why customers usually behave in a certain way and not the other and is basically the basis used by marketers to make their marketing mix in what is called marketing theory.

The basic buyer behaviour theory was postulated by Abraham Maslow, and this was based on the priority or the necessity of products and services and it mainly applies to the consumer goods. The second theory applies to merchandise or the industrial goods. This theory addresses the typical behaviour of buyers of organisational products or merchandise for business (Howard 1993). Essentially, there are four characteristic types of buyer behaviour as explained by the buyer behaviour theories and the categorization is determined by the kind good or services intended for purchase.

The aim of the theories is to give answers to the following questions about customers; who? How? When? Where? And why do they buy? The buying behaviours are (Howard 1993); 1. Complex behaviour- this is the situation where a customer buys very expensive brand and inquires for more information prior to real purchasing. 2. Habitual buyer – this is when a client gets used to buying certain goods and regularly purchases them as a habit like newspapers etc. 3. Variety seeking behaviour- this is when the customer

develops the habit of shopping around for purposes of making comparisons and experimenting new products.

This kind of client can shop different brands of the product say bread, cosmetics etc. 4. Dissonance reducing behaviour- these are buyers who get to do shopping because it is tasking or occasional. There is not greater influence by characteristics like branding, for instance the purchase of a gold chain. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory This theory explains what motivates people to purchase goods and the analysis is based on the priority or rather the necessity of the products or services to be purchased.

In his theory, Abraham Maslow suggests that people will target to meet their primary needs first which include hunger and thirst (this is psychological classification) (Howard 1993). When these necessities are adequately satisfied, then the individuals can move to the next step of the hierarchy, i. e. the safety requirements where main concern is the job security and the assurance that they will have regular income. The social needs come next and they are the need to be loved, this is a general human yearning and individuals will work hard to attain this sense of belonging.

Self esteem comes next and this is the need to be recognised in terms of status quo and social class in the society, e. g. wearing branded shirts. Self actualization is the top most level of human needs and it is when an individual has achieved the most out of life, a point of life fulfilment (Howard & Sheth 1999). One can wonder that how can this concept help Unilever to market its products? Generally, marketing is meant to ensure that goods are sold and that they meet customers' demands. The Maslow theory suggests



that the individuals need keep on changing as they strive along hierarchy of needs to achieve self actualization.

Unilever stores can store products that meet the esteem needs (particularly Dove beauty products). This concept is therefore very important to marketers (Dibb & Simkin 2001). The theory of buying merchandise is more like the Maslow's theory only that it does not include so much of the behavioural aspects. The theory works at macro-level and does not take into consideration how the retailers manage their business, the profits and hence it is of no big use to Unilever Company. Recommendations and Conclusions  
The two important marketing strategies are developing a marketing plan and carrying a market research.

Developing the format of a marketing plan is the first step in making a marketing strategy. The plan should include; the objective and business mission; situation Analysis; the aims of the marketing strategy; strategic and tactical procedures; the budget and means of analyzing performance; and contingencies. The first step is to describe the challenge i. e. product to be marketed; in this case, the products are sandwiches, cold and hot drinks. Situation analyses include several aspects, competitor analysis, SWOT analysis, company analysis and customer analysis (consumer behaviour).

Customers are a very critical element of any business venture and during market planning it is very important to carry out a market research about customer information including purchasing habits, type of customers, number of customer, and concentration of customers centre for certain products etc. Competition can be overcome by optimizing on the opportunities, maximizing the strengths and eliminating the weaknesses. All

these are obtained through market research analysis of market segmentation and position.

Unilever can greatly influence customers to purchase Dove beauty products by the process known as market concepts which can be derived from buyer behaviour. References Dibb. S & Simkin L. (2001). Marketing Briefs. A Revision and Study Guide. Butterworth-Heinemann Howard J. A (1993). Marketing: Executive and Buyer Behaviour. Columbia University Press Howard J. A & Sheth J. N (1999). The Theory of Buyer Behaviour. Wiley Klopper H. B et al (2006). Marketing. Fresh Perspectives. Pearson South Africa. Shaw R. T & Semenik R. J (1999). Marketing. South Western Publishing Company.