

Ways in which consumer choice is influenced commerce essay



The aim of this essay is to critically evaluate the ways in which consumer choice is influenced by our psychological need to create and maintain both our personal and social self-concept.

Two years ago, I looked at my wardrobe and came to the conclusion that I had enough clothes but something was still missing. I had more than enough clothes but I didn't have a perfect bag that suited all my clothes. I came to the conclusion that I had a new mission. Instead of buying a relatively cheap bag I decided to save money to buy the perfect bag I always wanted to have. It took me quite a long time before I had the amount of money of buy the perfect bag. However I wanted the perfect bag so badly that I worked hard to get the money. After a few months I bought the perfect bag that suited my entire wardrobe. However after the purchase I did not feel better with my new and relatively expensive perfect bag. It was not even big enough to fit all my personal belongings. I asked myself the question why I wanted that bag so badly and why the bag did not make me happier. Why didn't I just save my money for something more special? Why did I want such a fashionably item? Overall I asked myself the question what kinds of factors have influenced me to buy that special bag. Furthermore I asked myself if this mission was not a perfect illustration of factors that influenced my personal buying behavior. In the essay I will evaluate my purchase experience and analyze why consumers can show a certain consumer behavior.

According to Asume (2012) I am perfect example of showing my personality with a certain bag and that I want to be seen as an exclusive shopper. In the end I bought the bag to reward myself, to satisfy my psychological need and to try to make myself feel better. I spend hours in other shops considering

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and comparing other different bags, not worrying about the price, but in the end anything kept me from buying that one and only bag. This purchase was a perfect example of my self-concept. I wanted define myself with this expensive and exclusive bag, but some factors have influenced my purchase. I did not choose for a cheaper alternative. I wanted to be associated and seen by others as a person who was up to date and following the latest fashion trends. However the bag was not even practical. The outside of my bag was saying more about my identity. My first choice was not based on the form or function of the bag but about the way I wanted to show my identity.

People have reflections of their attitudes towards themselves. Whether these attitudes are negative or positive, these attitudes will help to make a decision about products or services. Most attitudes are automatically being influenced due to the past experience and the perception of certain products and services. However these automatically attitudes will not always lead to the same choices as it will be more influences by the social and cultural environment as well. Purchases can be used to boost consumer's self-esteem or to reward themselves. This is what I did after saving money to buy the perfect bag. In the end the possessions of people will help to reflect their identities. According to Knor and tatt (2010) Modern shoppers buy things to reward themselves, to satisfy psychological needs or to make themselves feel good. Consumers are being influenced by their perception, motivation, learning or beliefs and attitudes as well to buy a certain product. These psychological influences have an enormous impact on the consumer buying behaviour.

The world is changing as well as the needs and wants of the consumers throughout the world. Trends, technology, innovation and the World Wide Web are influencing the way people are. These factors are affecting the buying behaviour of the consumer throughout the world. The globalization makes the world smaller as well as creating more demand for products and services. Marketers are constantly seeking to understand how consumers behave around the world. They are trying to create gaps in the global market as well as responding to the needs of the customers. Their influence has never been so strong due to the influence of programming, social media and advertising.

The process by which people purchase products and services is influenced by their need and wants. According to Solomon (2007) the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experience to satisfy needs or desires. The process by which consumers decide which products and services they will select can be highly more complex and variable. (Solomon 2007). The consumer's needs and wants are constantly changing. Nowadays the individual consumption behaviour is in the middle of attention and it is a meaningful practise of our every day life.

My purchase was heavily influenced by the opinions and behaviours of my social group. All my friends did have a perfect bag that suited their entire wardrobe. I was influenced by having conversations about the latest fashion trends with my friends rather than being influenced by the commercials, magazines or advertising made by the marketers. I did not want to buy a bag

from maybe even a more practical and more quality brand. I wanted to be approved by my friends that all loved that particular brand.

People share cultural values and have beliefs and attitudes about how they think the world should be. Other groups are influencing people as well: their subculture or their social class. Buying a perfect bag does not mean that it signify my social status unless others in the reference groups or social groups share the same ideas and beliefs as I did. In this case my reference group had heavily influenced me. The people who matter to me value the idea that I needed to be style conscious, independent, show your identity with expensive clothes and following the latest fashion trends.

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Marketers have to try to identify reference groups of their target markets. According to Bearden and Etzel (1982) reference groups concepts have been used by advertisers in their efforts to persuade consumers to purchase products and brands. The effect of the reference group is large on customer behaviors because they expose people to new behaviors and lifestyles.

Looking at trends and innovation people change their lifestyle constantly to keep going with the rest of the world. Reference groups influences attitudes

and the self-concept as well. Reference group usage of a brand provides user image associations and psychological benefit associations for brands (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). This means that certain brands are being used to create and define a consumer's self-concept. Consumers want to link themselves with the things they like and they want to present themselves to others through their brand choices. They are choosing for certain brands due to their self-image, brand image and the choice of the reference group.

Reference groups are associated with certain brands. Customers want to be connected with a certain reference groups because they want to be associated with them. Escalas and Bettman (2003) states that brand use by reference groups is a source of brand associations, which become linked to consumers' mental representation of self as consumers actively construct themselves by selecting brands with associations relevant to an aspect of their current self-concept or possible self. This means that consumers like the same things as the reference groups do. So customers are not only associated with certain brands as their reference group but also due their self-concept.

I always had the intention to buy the bag because it suited my image but my reference group really pushed me a little bit more to by the bag in the end.

Another aspect is the influence of culture that creates a certain meaning of products in different kind of societies. Every person carries within him or herself patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that were learned throughout their lifetime. (Hofstede 2005) Cultural influences are the basis of customer

behavior because it is the way people act, create and learn things in the

society. It creates a certain importance of things in life. According to <https://assignbuster.com/ways-in-which-consumer-choice-is-influenced-commerce-essay/>

Hofstede (2005) culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguished the members of one group or category of people from others'. This means that the subjective culture influence the practices, values and cognitive beliefs of consumers, which in the end influences the attitude and social norms as well. Culture differs from one society to another and therefore there are different consumer behaviour looking at different societies.

Customers who strongly feel connected with their environment, care about their own culture and are giving careful thoughts about certain products and services.

Markets are identifying other kinds of cultural groups: subculture, social class to understand the needs and wants of consumers as well.

An interesting feature is consumers change all the time. The world changes constantly and so do people. Consumers have the capability of being part of one subculture as well as being influenced through other factors therefore they can change. Customer can have many assumptions about clothes, food, services and how people interact with each other. This has the ability to change after encountering different environments. However once something is embedded in peoples culture marketers found it difficult to change their well-established identity. It is something what people learned and found important right from the scratch. Symbols, heroes, rituals and values remain unconscious to those who hold them and most of the time only the practices of a culture can be learned and change throughout people lives.

Generally all different kind of groups have the capability of unconscious pressure to influence and to re-enforce people.

The consumer choice is also being influence by the symbolical meaning of products and services. The level of involvement plays an important role in the perception and importance of products and services. Most low involvement purchases are most of the time not showing heavily influenced consumer behaviour as these purchases have limited information and a simple decision process. High involvement products are associated with symbolic meaning for the consumer's sense of the self. Their emotional processes rather than cognitive evaluation are influencing consumers. Consumers are taking symbolic meanings into account when they are thinking about a purchase and making a consumption choice. According to Elliot (1998) these meanings also serve in the construction, maintenance and communication of social and individual identity. Low self esteem are most of the time associated with dysfunctional and sometimes abdicative consumer behavior as well whereas products with symbolic meanings are embedded in the areas of the personal self behavior. Furthermore they are intensely integrated in the growth, affection and support of social groups and relationships. That's because consumer are most of the time giving presents to each other containing a symbolic meaning. According to Wattanasuwan (2005) people employ consumption symbolically not only to create and sustain the self but also to locate us in the society. Again this is being influences by our self as well as being part of people's own environment. Consumers make purchases when they contain symbolic meanings.

I wanted to be buy the perfect bag that symbolized ' I am an independent and fashionably young women'. In the end all consumption has a meaning of symbolism to create and identify the self as well as to be associated and viewed by others. According to Gabriel and Lang (1995) we consume clothes, hairstyles, shoes, cars, computers and other products that contribute to the symbolic means of self-identification, through which we align ourselves emotionally with those sharing our lifestyles. The perfect bag was an example of symbolism because I felt that I belong to the fashion group that I had created by buying the bag.

Marketers, reference groups, social groups, and other external factors do not only influence customers. People change and therefore their subconscious and conscious decision behaviour will change during their lifetime. Different life stages are changing the consumer behavior, material goods and their self-completion. A perfect example is celebrating Christmas once a year. Most people see Christmas as a memory of happy times. The transition of life stages makes people perceptions, attitudes and buying behavior different. Children are being more excited than adults. They are more nervous about how many presents they will get from the Santa clause every year. Adults are less excited and they want to celebrate Christmas with their family by having diner and catching up good old memories.

This is something that marketers cannot influence as well because people change themselves.

The world is rapidly developing and changing as a result values, needs and consumer behaviour are changing constantly as well. Nowadays consumers

do not buy products only because of their main function or to satisfy their needs. Customers are choosing for products that have a brand personality that matches their own self-concept. It has become more complex where the today's role of products exceeds its basic role. Innovation, trends and the power of the World Wide Web are making the needs and the wants more complicated. Customers are seeking for products that fulfil and create their perceived value, personal and self- concept.

However not only the consumer characteristics and the consumer physiological needs influence the choice of the consumer. People change themselves as well while growing up. The different life-stages have the capability to loose certain product characteristics and psychological needs as well as creating a demand for other products and services. My perfect bag was a perfect example of being influenced by both internal and external factors. Two years ago I wanted the perfect bag and did everything to get the perfect bag. Now being older and having more knowledge and life experience I can conclude that I will never make such a purchase. The then internal, external factors and the transition of my life made me realize that they are more important things than such a materialistic bag. However I change all the time and I will never stop changing. What I value today is already going to be different tomorrow. Marketers, internal and external factors are always influencing my decision buying process. Maybe I won't fall for the perfect bag anymore but there will be something else that will influence me which will create and maintain both my personal and self-concept again.

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