

# Consumer behaviour analysis



**Abstract** This essay critically reviews and discusses regarding the potential consumer needs and motivations that relate to a specific brand of Christian Louboutin's lipstick-red soles.

It then further discusses several definitions and theoretical concepts in order to assist and support the main evidence of: (1) how the needs and motivations of consumers are being linked to the luxury brand product as well as how it influences the purchase decision making process; (2) the analysis between generic goals and product-specific goals; (3) whether consumers are being rationally or emotionally motivated throughout the decision making; (4) how the marketing campaign that is being applied in Christian Louboutin motivates different types of arousal.

The data and information used as evidence have been collected from published reports, articles, internet, and academic journals. This review also provided a concise recommendation as to whether it is more appropriate to apply positive or negative motivation in highly competitive fashion industry.

1 1- Introduction The red-soled stiletto king, Christian Louboutin has dedicated his life in creating luxurious footwear for women. In the year 1992, the brand Christian Louboutin's first store came into reality in Paris, France with different store locations in 50 other countries ideally situated in major cities.

Christian Louboutin's shoes became instantly recognizable to those fashion cognoscenti for the trademark of 'red-lacquered soles' (WeConnectFashion, 2011). The main purpose of this essay is to provide definition of terms being applied and further review of how consumer needs and motivations can

influence in purchase decision making and the product choice of female dress shoes that is being related to a particular brand product of Christian Louboutin and last but not least, critically evaluate the current marketing campaign that is being used by the company for various arousal of motives.

- Consumer needs and motivations 2. 1 Relationship of needs and motivations Human needs are being defined as “ states of felt deprivation” (Kotler, Brown, Burton, Deans & Armstrong, 2010, p. 6), which eventually lead to actions being undertaken to fulfill the different individual needs. Consumers tend to choose, purchase, utilize and dispose the products in order to satisfy their own needs (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009, as cited in Workman & Lee, 2010). Consumer needs usually create tendency to respond whereas, motivation requires active reaction (Mahatoo, 1989, as cited in Workman & Lee, 2010).

There are two types of needs: innate and acquired needs. Innate needs are also known as primary needs which are required for basic needs to maintain biological life such as the need of water to fulfill the thirst. The latter needs are known as the psychological needs that are being learnt from our surrounding environment and cultures, for example, the need for Christian Louboutin shoes for desire of prestige, status, recognition, power and self-esteem (Schiffman, Bednall, O’Cass, Paladino, Ward & Kanuk, 2008). 2

Accordingly to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, it is mainly composed of five basic levels of human needs: physiological, safety, social, ego and self-actualisation needs (Schiffman et al. , 2008) as appeared in Appendix, figure 1. Throughout the purchase of Louboutin’s shoes, consumers tend to satisfy their physiological needs for female dress shoes, social needs for peer

pressure, self-belonging or attachment to their close friends, ego needs to reveal their status, prestige and high self-esteem as recent statistics on retail expenditure shows that American women tend to spend approximately \$18. billion only on shoes itself in year 2006 (Karimi, 2007) and finally achieving self-actualisation needs by purchasing one of the most popular and expensive soles ranging above \$500 dollars per pair become part of hobby indicating luxurious lifestyle. It is worthwhile to spend huge amount of money since it provides the greatest value by obtaining one of the sexiest heels worn by the top stars (Freeman, 2010).

Motivation can be defined as high intensity of emotion or desire within every individual that drives action to satisfy the unmet needs which act as a role for providing the motor for certain behaviour (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, as cited in Pincus, 2004). Motivation depicts the state of tension that is being derived from the unmet needs which impels individual to participate in certain behaviour that will lead to need satisfaction and eventually reduce the high intensity of tension that has been aroused (Schiffman et al. , 2008) as shown in Appendix, figure 2.

It is very crucial for marketers to motivate the consumers to purchase their brand products or services by providing them the greatest perceived value (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999, as cited in Sobh & Martin, 2011) since motivation acts as a major variable that relates between individual factors with buying behaviour (Wang, Sun & Song, 2010). 3 Consumers are being influenced by both external and internal motives in decision making and product choice. External motives involve promotional activities such as sales promotion campaign and advertising which attracts social power.

For example, Christian Louboutin shoes are being worn by many loyal clienteles of famous Hollywood stars such as Jennifer Lopez, Angelina Jolie, Madonna and the famous reality show presenter, Oprah Winfrey which consumers refer to as an aspirational group (Betts, 2008) that motivates to purchase for luxurious lifestyle, emotional satisfaction and entertainment (Wang, Sun & Song). Despite having several famous high-end competitors such as Manolo Blahnik and Jimmy Choo, compared to these brands, Louboutin's red soles expose 'sexual appeals' as everyone tend to instantly recognize sole when they turn back and walk away (Freeman, 2010).

Goals Goals are defined as the desired outcomes or results of motivated behaviour (Schiffman et al. , 2008) and according to Winell (1987), it could lead to positive effects to be desired or negative goals to be evaded (Gutman, 1997). It acts as the primary motivation for the consumer behaviour and as the lower-level of goals are being satisfied, there is greater possibility for the higher-level of goals to be achieved in the future ((Pieters et al. , 1995; Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, as cited in Gutman, 1997).

Goals can be either generic or product-specific. Generic goals are the wide-range categories or general view of goals which consumers tend to satisfy one's needs. For instance, if a high-class urban woman tells her friends that she is willing to purchase a pair of heels for the party, she is stating a generic goal. However, marketers are more concerned about the product-specific goal since it provides more specific brand product choice being selected by consumers (Schiffman, et al. 2008), such as willingness to purchase a pair of exquisite eponymous label of Christian Louboutin's glossy red soles to satisfy the need of self-esteem and prestige (Arghavan &



due to its unique design, consistently superior quality, exclusivity and most distinguished signature of sexy red soles (Constance & Kwok, 2007) which is the sign that everyone immediately recognizes what you are wearing a Louboutin.

Although Blahnik shoes are quite famous for its expensive-looking and sexy heels, they face the problem of ‘common looking shoes’ which eventually lead consumers to select Louboutin’s uniqueness to satisfy their needs (Jacob, 2005).

#### 5.2.4 Arousal of motives

There are four main types of arousal of motives consisting physiological, emotional, cognitive and environmental arousals. According to the review of Christian Louboutin’s shoes, it mainly evokes the emotional and cognitive arousals. Emotional arousal is the motive that is being aroused due to emotional feeling (Schiffman, et al. and it leads to positive or negative emotion such as feeling of fear, curiosity, nervous tension, and anger that often impel to act unconsciously. Cognitive arousal induces to perceive awareness towards needs and is known as “mental stimulation” (ChangingMinds.org, n. d. ). Celebrity endorsements became prevalent and effective marketing campaign to increase persuasiveness, trustworthiness (Silvera & Austad, 2004) and also convince consumers for its highly-perceived quality of the products that have been advertised (Stallen, Smidts, Rijpkema, Smit, Klucharev & Fernandez, 2010) which act as means of persuasive communication.

Netemeyer et al. (1995) stated that the internal motives such as vanity and appearance of public self-consciousness have essential underlying motivation in purchase decision making (Workman & Lee, 2010). For instance, individuals who are self-conscious about how others perceive them

are usually those who concern about fashion trend and their likely appearance and tend to arouse emotional motive that drives them to purchase high involvement products such as Louboutin exclusive stiletto to reveal status and self-image (Miller & Cox, 1982, as cited in Workman & Lee, 2010).

This type of symbolic aspirational reference group tends to enhance appeal of advertisements as well as audience attentiveness. The exclusivity of the red-soled shoes with its unique design never brought failure to consumer's expectation (GeekShoes, 2009). Consumers tend to spend enormous amount of money to purchase the red soles, as they can experience superior quality, uniqueness, exclusivity and the most crucial thing of all is that it makes them feel especially tachycardia and special which initiates them into Louboutin's special world (redshoesole, n. d. ). The main goal is to ' make a woman look sexy, beautiful and to make her legs look as long as possible in the red soles' and in the year 2009, one of the sexiest singer, Jennifer Lopez released the Love album including a song titled " Louboutins" which stimulated emotional and cognitive arousal (Gatecrasher, 2010). The global phenomenon of word of mouth and extensive coverage on the pages of glossy magazines such as Vogue have evoked for ' Sole Desire' (Betts, 2008) and Louboutin appeared in the video called ' Psycho' which is a remake of Alfred Hitchcock's psychological thriller movie (Phelps, 2009).

Unlike other competitors, Christian Louboutin does not feel the need to advertise or market the products, since the trademark of red sole itself is and worldwide advertisement (Fashionologie, 2010). 3- Conclusion

Throughout the review, several researchers and journal articles revealed

<https://assignbuster.com/consumer-behaviour-analysis/>



evidences that consumer needs and motivation do influence purchase decision making as well as the particular brand product choice that have been selected by each individual.

It is highly beneficial to apply positive motivation especially those relating to fashion products such as female dress shoes as it will enhance positive brand image when perceived by consumers. Thus, it is very crucial for every competitive fashion retail industry to apply appropriate marketing campaign in order to increase brand awareness and compete against other competitors through product differentiation and goal accomplishment.