

## ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN DETERMINING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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### ABSTRACT

*Consumer behaviour is a multidimensional and dynamic concept. In India, increase in population with huge diversity and the ever expanding choices and freedom, makes the study of consumer behavior a must for the marketing functions. The purpose of this paper is to understand the role of psychological factors in determining consumer behavior. Perception, motives, attitudes, learning, personality and beliefs are the major psychological factors affecting the buying behaviour. These factors are considered as the key foundations of consumer behavior and are assumed very important from view point of marketing firms. Thorough understanding and study of the psychological factors enable the marketers in building effective marketing strategies.*

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**Keywords:** *Consumer Behaviour, Buying Behavior, Psychological Factors, Perception, Motives.*

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### Introduction

Consumer behaviour is a vast and complex subject. It is simply a sub-section of the larger field of human behaviour. "Consumer behaviour is the behaviour that consumers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs". (Kanuk, Consumer behaviour, 2007) It is a study of how individuals make decisions to spend their scarce resources like- time, money and efforts on consumption related items. Consumer behaviour involves understanding why, when, where, how, how much, how often and for how long consumers will buy, use or dispose of an offering. (MacInnis, 2007)

Consumer behaviour has assumed growing importance in the present day marketing system. Studying consumer behaviour infuses marketing action with dignity and builds bridges with consumers. (Xardel, Consumer Behaviour: Concepts, Applications and Cases, 2004) It unearths much relevant information to help marketers in the selection of target segments, developing the positioning strategy and develop appropriate marketing mixes for different markets and groups of consumers.

### Objectives of the Study

- To identify psychological factors which influence the buying patterns of consumer.
- To study and understand the role of psychological factors in determining consumer behaviour.

### Review of Literature

**Gita Rahayu, Dewi Kurniati and Anita Suharyani (Gita Rahayu, 2020)** pointed out that psychological factors had a huge influence on consumer buying decision whether be positive or negative.

**V. Singh, R. Chaudhuri and S. Verma (V. Singh, 2019)** urged that psychological factors which influence decisions regarding online buying are: attitude, motivation, perception, personality, perceived value etc. However, perceived value is the greatest trait of psychological behaviour that affects the decision of online buying significantly.

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**Georgi T. Lichev (Lichev, 2017)** in his study “psychological factors in determining consumer behaviour”, observe that these factors are individually important in each person. Their influence is strong, but difficult to exactly quantify. Their peculiar character is that they represent consumers’ unique qualities and ways of responding.

According to Manali Khaniwale, (Khaniwale, 2015) the value of a product of service for any individual depends on how he perceives it, what attitude he/ she has toward it, what he believes about it and what motivates his purchase.

**Pinky Rani (Rani, 2014)** in her study on “factors influencing consumer behaviour”, noted that motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes are major psychological factors which influence consumer behaviour to a great extent.

### **Psychological Factors- Meaning and Types**

Psychological factors are directly linked to the psyche of a person. These factors are considered as the foundation of consumer behaviour and are assumed very important from the marketing perspective of the various organizations. Psychological factors explain why an individual behaves in a unique manner. The major psychological factors which influence behavioural patterns of consumers, are as follows:

- **Perception:** perception is the process which individuals select, organize and interpret stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. (Kanuk, Consumer Behaviour, 2007) Perception helps to explain why different individuals respond differently to the same stimuli under the same conditions. The marketing company may provide stimulus to the consumers through the design, colour, shape, smell, taste, package and quality of product.
- **Motives:** consumers have a unique mixture of motives, which influence their buying in a variety of ways in various situations. A motive is an inner state that energizes, activates or moves and that directs behaviour towards goals. (Steiner, 2004) It is also known as link between the need and response, i.e. the need and the behaviour of the consumer. Marketers should identify as to which motive is implying consumer for a specific behaviour. (R. K. Kothari, 2009)
- **Attitude:** attitude may be termed as a person’s enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluation, emotional feeling action tendencies towards same object or idea. (David Krech, 2004) Attitude affects behaviour of a consumer by putting him ready to respond in a positive or negative way to things in his environment. The marketing managers should focus to study the attitudes of the consumer of their target market in order to design appropriate marketing mix.
- **Learning:** the psychological factor learning is the central point in the study of consumer behaviour. When a consumer acts, he learns. Learning is a significant determinant of his buying behaviour. In marketing context, learning is the process by which individual acquire the purchase and consumption knowledge and experience that they apply to future related behaviour.
- **Personality:** it is an extremely important factor influencing consumer behaviour. It plays a vital role in determining the mind make up of a consumer. Personality is an individual’s unique psychological trait which consistently influence how the person responds his or her environment. (Roger D. Blackwell, 2003)
- **Beliefs:** belief is defined as descriptive thought that a person holds about something. (Kotler, 2003) From the marketing view point, the belief that consumer has about a brand, is important because it determines his approach towards buying and using it.

### **Role of Psychological Factors**

Psychology of a buyer directly affects his behavioral pattern. What a consumer thinks in his mind, he behaves accordingly during purchasing. Therefore, the role of psychological factors is immense in determining buying behaviour of consumer.

The way consumer perceives things definitely affect his purchase behaviour. Different people perceive the same object differently. (Kaneez, 2012) For instance, if a person is looking to purchase a car, the car advertisements will attract him and he will remember them whereas one who is not in need of a car may not remember the advertisement even after seeing it many times. Perception are being formed by the individuals all the time and are stored for future responses. These stored perceptions are considered by them at all consumption decisions. Therefore, it is not the product, but the perception about the product, that matters in consumer behaviour.

Consumer is a unique mixer of motives, which influence their buying in a variety of ways in various situations. The companies which better understand the consumers motive stand a greater chance of attracting and retaining consumers. Motive related research benefits them in their development of realistic ideas for promotional campaigns by approaching the consumers' consciousness and stimulating latent needs positively.

Attitudes have a motivational quality, that is, they might propel a consumer towards a particular behaviour and repel the consumer away from a particular behaviour. (Kanuk, Consumer Behaviour, 2007) Consumers develop favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards products before they decide to buy it. The vision of consumers gets clouded due to this attitude and their choices of the products get influenced. (Xardel, Consumer Behaviour: Concepts, Application and Cases, 2004) Thus, awareness about attitudes helps the marketers in deciding what particular attributes and service components should be there in the marketing programme to create a positive disposition.

The learning, as a psychological factor has great importance because it provides an insight into the consumers' decision making process. Through learning consumers acquire the purchase and consumption knowledge and experience and they apply it to future related behaviour. (Nair, 2013) Learning is helpful in building brand among consumers. It enables the marketers to construct demand for a product by relating it to strong drives, employing the cues that are motivating and providing positive enforcement.

Consumers usually purchase the products or brands that match up with and are suitable to their personality. They personally tend to identify themselves with certain brands or use brands as a means of self-expression. (Kim, 2000) Personality traits provide a richer understanding of consumer behaviour. Marketers are interested in personality as way to segment and target consumers. For instance, the marketing firms engaged in car industry can match the car with the following personality types: family-oriented and economic, elitist and distinct, elegant and aristocratic, young and athletic, powerful and gigantic. Through all these personality types, related target markets can be approached.

Consumers have various descriptive thoughts regarding products and brands. These descriptive thoughts are called product and brand beliefs. If a consumer has a belief that a particular brand available in the market is good in quality, then it is very difficult to push another product without changing his brand belief. Beliefs constitute the brand image and if the consumers have wrong belief then they generate negative image about the brand. Information about consumers' beliefs helps the marketers in building positive brand image of their products and services.

### Conclusion

Psychological factors play an important role in directing consumer behaviour which is multidimensional and dynamic in nature. The study of psychological factors facilitates to comprehend and then modulate the various concerns. These concerns encompass buyer's perception regarding the product, attitude toward it and motivation to purchase. These psychological factors have significant influence on purchasing practice and decision making process. The basic principles of these factors can be significantly applied in adapting new products and can be utilized in designing promotional activities and advertisements. Therefore, insight regarding these will help organizations in creating more suitable products and building more effective marketing strategies.

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