

FACTORS INFLUENCING BUYERS BEHAVIOUR WHILE PURCHASING

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Abstract

A consumer's buyer behaviour is influenced by four major factors: Cultural, Social, Personal and Psychological. Cultural factors include a consumer's culture, subculture and social class. These factors are often inherent in our values and decision processes. Social factors include groups (reference groups, aspiration groups and member groups), family, roles and status. This explains the outside influences of others on our purchase decisions either directly or indirectly. Personal factors include such variables as age and lifecycle stage, occupation, economic circumstances, lifestyle (activities, interests, opinions and demographics), personality and self concept. These may explain why our preferences often change as our 'situation' changes. Psychological factors affecting our purchase decision include motivation (Maslow's hierarchy of needs), perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes.

Key words: Consumer behavior, purchasing decision, marketing, customer behavior.

Introduction

Consumer behavior while purchasing is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the procedures they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. It blends elements from psychology, sociology, socialanthropology, marketing and economics. It attempts to understand the decision-making process of buyers, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics and behavioural variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. Customer behaviour study is based on consumer buying behaviour, with the customer playing in three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer. Research has shown that consumer behaviour is difficult to expect, even for experts in the field. Consumers make purchase decisions when they buy small items, such as a cup of coffee, and when they buy larger items, such as a house. After recognizing a need or a want, consumers begin searching for products or services that fit their needs. They evaluate their options, taking note of everything from pricing to a brand's reputation, before marking a purchase. Four types of consumer buying behavior outline product purchase decisions.

Types of Consumer Buying Behaviors & Product Decisions

- **Impulse Purchases:** When a consumer stands at the checkout and notice magazines and similar goods they makes a purchase with no thought or planning involved. In most instances this happens with low-priced items.

- **Routine Purchases:** There are items consumers are used to purchasing every day, once a week or monthly. These can range from a morning cup of coffee from a nearby convenience store, to milk, eggs and cheese from the supermarket. Customers spend very little time deciding whether or not to purchase these items and don't typically need to read reviews or consult with friends for their opinions before they make routine purchases.
- **Limited Decision Making:** When customers engage in purchases that require limited decision making, they may seek advice or a suggestion from a friend. The consumer may research a few options, but the search is not as thorough, or as time consuming, as with a higher priced item.
- **Extensive Decision Making:** Purchases for high priced electronics, such as a television, computer or camera, or major purchases such as a home or car require consumers to use extensive decision making. Consumers spend substantial amounts of time researching a high number of potential options before they buy. The decision making process lasts longer, as the consumer is investing a substantial amount of money.

Factors influencing Buyers Behavior

There are many factors that influence the buyer behavior. Consumer behavior refers to the selection, purchase and consumption of goods and services for the satisfaction of their wants. There are different processes involved in the consumer behavior. Initially the consumer tries to find what commodities he would like to consume, then he selects only those commodities that promise greater utility. After selecting the commodities, the consumer makes an estimate of the available money which he can spend. Lastly, the consumer analyzes the prevailing prices of commodities and takes the decision about the commodities he should consume. Meanwhile, there are various other factors influencing the purchases of consumer such as marketing, personal, social, cultural, personal and psychological factors.

Marketing Factors

Each element of the market mix - product, pricing, promotion and place has the potential to affect the buying process at various stages.

- **Product:** The uniqueness of the product, the physical appearance and packaging can influence buying decision of a consumer.
- **Pricing:** Pricing strategy does affect buying behaviour of consumers. Marketers must consider the price sensitivity of the target customers while fixing prices.
- **Promotion:** The various elements of promotion such as advertising, publicity, public relations, personal selling, and sales promotion affect buying behaviour of consumers. Marketers select the promotion mix after considering the nature of customers.

- **Place:** The channels of distribution, and the place of distribution affects buying behaviour of consumers. Marketers makes an attempt to select the right channel and distribute the products at the right place.

Personal Factors

The personal factors of a consumer may affect the buying decisions. The personal factors include:

- **Age Factor:** The age factor greatly influences the buying behaviour. For instance, teenagers may prefer trendy clothes, whereas, office- executives may prefer formal clothing.
- **Gender:** The consumer behaviour varies across gender.
- **Education:** Highly educated persons may spend on books, personal care products, and so on. But a person with low or no education may spend less on personal grooming products, general reading books, and so on.
- **Income Level:** Normally, higher the income level, higher is the level of spending and vice-versa. But this may not be always the case in developing countries, especially in the rural areas.
- **Status' in the Society:** Persons enjoying higher status in the society do spend a good amount of money on luxury items such as luxury cars, luxury watches, premium brands of clothing, jewelers , etc.
- **Other Personal Factors:** The other personal factors such as personality, lifestyle, family size, etc., influence consumer behaviour.

Psychological Factors

A person's buying behaviour is influenced by psychological factors such as

- **Learning:** It refers to changes in individual behaviour that are caused by information and experience. For example, when a customer buys a new brand and is satisfied by its use, then he/she is more likely to buy the same brand the next time. Through learning, people acquire beliefs and attitudes, which in turn influence the buying behaviour.
- **Attitude:** It is a tendency to respond in a given manner to a particular situation or object or idea. Consumers may develop a positive, or negative or neutral attitude towards certain product or brands, which in turn would affect his/her buying behaviour.
- **Motives:** A motive is the inner drive that motivates a person to act or behave in a certain manner. The marketer must identify the buying motives of the target customers and influence them to act positively towards the marketed products.

- **Perception:** It is the impression, which one forms about a certain situation or object. A motivated person is ready to act. But the way or the manner in which he acts is influenced by his/her perception of the situation.
- **Beliefs:** A belief is a descriptive thought, which a person holds about certain things. It may be based on knowledge, opinion, faith, trust and confidence. People may hold certain beliefs of certain brands/products. Beliefs develop brand images, which in turn can affect buying behaviour.

Situational Influences

Major situational influences include the physical surroundings, social surroundings, time, the nature of the task, and monetary moods and conditions.

- **Physical Surroundings:** The physical surroundings at the place of purchase affects buying behaviour. For instance, when a customer is shopping in a store, the features that affects buying behaviour would include the location of the store, the decor, the layout of the store, the noise level, the way merchandise is displayed, and so on.
- **Social Surroundings:** The social surroundings of a situation involve the other people with the customer that can influence buying decision at the point of purchase. For instance, a bargain hunter shopping with an impatient friend may do quick purchases, and may not bargain over the price, so as to please the impatient customer.
- **Time Factor:** Customers may make different decisions based on when they purchase - the hour of the day, the day of the week, or the season of the year. For instance, a consumer who has received a pay cheque on a particular day may shop more items, than at the end of the month when he is short of funds.
- **Momentary Conditions:** The moods and conditions of the customer at the time of purchase may also affect the buying decision. A customer who is very happy would make a different buying decision, as compared to when he is not happy.

Social Factors

The social factors such as reference groups, family, and social and status affect the buying behaviour:

- **Reference Groups:** A reference group is a small group of people such as colleagues at work place, club members, friends circle, neighbours, family members, and so on. Reference groups influence its members as follows:
 - They influence members' values and attitudes.
 - They expose members to new behaviours and lifestyles.
 - They create pressure to choose certain products or brands.

- **Family:** The family is the main reference group that may influence the consumer behaviour. Nowadays, children are well informed about goods and services through media or friend circles, and other sources.
- **Roles and Status:** A person performs certain roles in a particular group such as family, club, organisation, and so on. For instance, a person may perform the role of senior executive in a firm and another person may perform the role of a junior executive. The senior executive may enjoy higher status in the organisation, as compared to junior executive.
- People may purchase the products that conform to their roles and status, especially in the case of branded clothes, luxury watches, luxury cars, and so on.

Cultural Factors

Culture includes race and religion, tradition, caste, moral values, etc. Culture also include sub-cultures such sub-caste, religious Sects, language, etc.

- **Culture:** It influences consumer behaviour to a great extent. Cultural values and elements are passed from one generation to another through family, educational institutions, religious bodies, social environment, etc. Cultural diversity influences food habits, clothing, customs and traditions, etc. For instance, consuming alcohol and meat in certain religious communities is not restricted, but in certain communities, consumption of alcohol and meat is prohibited.
- **Sub-Culture:** Each culture consists of smaller sub-cultures that provide specific identity to its members. Subcultures include sub-caste, religious sects geographic regions as South Indians, North Indians, and based on languages etc. The behaviour of people belong to various sub-cultures is different. Therefore, marketers may adopt multicultural marketing approach, i.e., designing and marketing goods and services that cater to the tastes and preferences of consumers belonging to different sub-cultures.

Conclusion

Each and every person has his or her own behavior towards the purchasing process , however all of them are influenced by certain factors. Those influences may be environmental, social, personal, or psychological influences. But the cultural values are shared among the people in the society and affect them gradually over time. Besides the society has different impacts on one's behavior depending on different groups to which it belongs. Each individual has their own effects varying from age or sex or the process of perceiving, motivating and memorizing. Those factors affect the consumer buying behavior so they should be considered. The consumers themselves are the decision makers and so are the most important factors in the consumer market. When a firm wants to enter in to a foreign market then the local customer behavior is probably different from customer

behavior that they are dealing with the home country. Therefore it is important for the marketing manager to take all these factors into consideration, and helping them to develop marketing campaign in the international market and to improve the product to fully satisfy the customer which ultimately increase sales and develops in global level.

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