



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

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Lecture-15



Individual Determinants of Consumer Behavior

Motivation and Involvement

In a society, different consumers exhibit different consumer behaviour because they are unique and have unique sets of needs. Motivation is that internal force that activates some needs and provides direction of behaviour towards fulfilment of these needs.

While talking of motivation, we cannot afford to forget the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs which tells us about the primary and secondary needs. First the biological needs of hunger, thirst, shelter are satisfied then the safety needs and then the psychological desires of being accepted in society, seeking status, esteem, etc. are satisfied. People adopt different methods to fulfil their needs. The need of transport can be met by car, rail, bus or aeroplane. People choose different modes of transport because of their level of involvement in different activities.

Involvement refers to the personal relevance or importance of a product or a service, that a consumer perceives in a given situation. Depending on the value and personal interest, a consumer can have a high or low involvement. For a professional tennis player, the choice of a tennis racket is made with great care. He sees the weight, size, grip and tension of the strings, etc. The racket is his most important professional tool. Similarly, a professional photographer has to buy a camera with the right specifications and attributes. For another person, a tennis racket may only be a means of entertainment or in the case of a camera, the recording of family and other events by a camera which is convenient and handy.

Attitudes

These are learned predispositions towards people, objects and events. Attitudes are responsible for our responses and are not inborn but are learnt from people around us.

Our attitudes influence our purchase decisions and consumer behaviour. A person having a carefree attitude will buy an object without much involvement. People who want to play safe and avoid risk taking, will go for a safe investment. People who want convenience and are short of domestic help, will have a positive attitudes towards canned and frozen foods.

Personality and Self-concept

It is the sum total of our mental, physical and moral qualities and characteristics that are present in us and that make us what we are. Consumers try to buy the products that match their personality. People wanting to look manly will buy products with a macho appeal, which would enhance their image and personality. People who give emphasis on comfort and care, will purchase comfort products and so on. If one wants to emulate a film star his choice will be different from others.

Learning and Memory

Every day we are exposed to a wide range of information, but retain only a small portion of it. We tend to remember the information that we are interested in or, that is important to us. In a family different members of the family are interested in different types of information which they individually retain. Mothers retain information regarding household items. Father retains information regarding his interest in cars, motor cycles and other objects. Children are interested in objects of their interest like amusement parks, joy rides, Barbie dolls, etc.

Our motives, attitudes, personality filters the information. Keeping only relevant information in our minds and, keeping the others out. This is known as *selective retention*. We retain in our memory only selective information that is of interest to us.

Information Processing

All consumers analyse and process the information they receive. These are activities that a consumer engages in, while gathering, assimilating and evaluating information. Consumers assimilate and evaluate selective information and this reflects on their motives, attitudes and personality and self-concept. Same information can be evaluated in a different manner by different individuals. The most common example is a glass half filled with a liquid. It can be interpreted as “half empty” or half full. The first is a pessimistic view and the other is an optimistic view of processing the information.