



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.B.A.LL.B. IInd Semester

SUBJECT: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

SUBJECT CODE: BBL -203

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Lecture-22



Individual Determinants of Consumer Behavior

Personality – Consumer Behaviour

To understand a buyer needs and convert them into customers is the main purpose of the consumer behavior study. To understand the buyer habits and his priorities, it is required to understand and know the personality of the buyer.

Personality signifies the inner psychological characteristics that reflect how a person reacts to his environment. Personality shows the individual choices for various products and brands. It helps the marketers in deciding when and how to promote the product. Personality can be categorized on the basis of individual traits, likes, dislikes etc.

Though personality is static, it can change due to major events such as death, birth or marriage and can also change gradually with time. By connecting with the personality characteristics of an individual, a marketer can conveniently formulate marketing strategies.

We will discuss in this chapter the various theories of personality.

Trait Theory

Traits are the features of an individual or tendency of an individual in a particular manner. Traits help in defining the behavior of consumers. According to the Trait theorists, an individual's personality make-up stems out of the traits that he possesses, and the identification of traits is important.

Following are the few of the most common traits –

- Outgoing
- Sad
- Stable
- Serious
- Happy go lucky
- Relaxed

- Self assured
- Practical
- Imaginative

Trait theory is representative of multi-personality theories. Trait theory is based on certain assumptions, such as traits which are certainly stable in nature and a limited number of traits are common to most of the people.

According to the Trait theorists, an individual's personality make-up stems out of the traits that he possesses, and the identification of traits is important. The trait theories can be of two broad categories, viz., Simple trait theories and general trait theories.

Simple Trait Theories

In simple trait theories, a limited number of traits are identified, and people are categorized and classified on the basis of these traits.

General Trait Theories

In general trait theories, a large variety of traits are identified.

The Psychoanalytic Theory of Freud

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychology, became famous with his psychoanalytic theory of personality. In fact, the theory is regarded as the cornerstone of modern psychology. Sigmund based his theory on certain assumptions which is as follows –

Unconscious needs or drives lie at the heart of human motivation and personality.

The socialization process that takes place within people in a social set up has a huge impact on individual behavior. Freud explained much of how the psyche or the mind operates, and proposed that, human psyche is composed of parts within our awareness and beyond our awareness.

He said that all behavior within an individual cannot be explained, much lies in the subconscious.

- **Id** – According to Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of personality, the id operates based on the pleasure principle, which stresses on immediate fulfillment of needs. The id is the personality component made up of unconscious psychic energy which satisfies basic urges, needs, and desires.
- **Ego** – Ego is that state of awareness which thinks of you as separate from the other. It always thinks of the glories of the past and hopes of the future and focuses on guiltiness. It always thinks of what was and what could be.
- **Super Ego** – The superego provides guidelines for making judgments. It is the aspect of personality that holds all our moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and society.

Neo-Freudian Theory

There were a group of psychologists who believed that social interaction and resultant relationships formed the basis for the growth and development of personality. Here, they disagreed with their contemporary, Freud, who believed that personality was –

- Biological and rooted in genetics, and
- Was groomed as a result of early childhood experiences. This group of researchers who laid emphasis on the process of socialization came to be known as the Neo. To form a personality, social relationships are very important.

Based on this, consumers are classified into three personality types –

- **Complaint Personalities** – They prefer love and affection and so they move towards them and so they prefer known brands.
- **Aggressive Personalities** – They tend to move against others and they show off their need for power, success etc which is quite manipulative.
- **Detached Personalities** – They are not much aware of brands and are more self reliant and independent.

Marketers also tend to use Neo-Freudian theories while segmenting markets and positioning their products.