



**M.A. PSYCHOLOGY
SEMESTER III (CBCS)**

**PSYCHOLOGY PAPER -
COURSE IV (ELECTIVE COURSE)
CONSUMER
PSYCHOLOGY**

SUBJECT CODE : PPSY304A

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Elective Course IV PAPSY 304A: 4 Credits, 60 hrs.

CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

Objectives:

1. Introducing basic psychological principles so as to understand consumer behaviour
2. Familiarizing how people's buying behaviour gets affected by self and social processes
3. Acquainting advanced research methods to examine different aspects of consumer behaviour

Module 1: Introducing Consumer Psychology

- a. Historical antecedents
- b. Understanding consumer behaviour: Varied theoretical approaches
- c. Methodological issues in understanding consumer behaviour
- d. Consumer society in the twenty-first century

Module 2: Psychological Issues in Consumer Behaviour

- a. The implicit consumer cognition
- b. The nature and role of affect in consumer behaviour
- c. Consumer attitudes and behaviour
- d. Motivation and goals in consumption

Module 3: The *Self* and *Social* in Consumer Behaviour

- a. Dynamics of relationship between Brands and identity
- b. How products prime social networks
- c. Family consumption decision making
- d. Consumer socialization

Module 4: Advances in Research Methods

- a. Online observation
- b. Netnography
- c. Focus group and depth interviews
- d. Cross-cultural consumer psychology

Essential Reading

- Haugtvedt, C. P. & Herr, P.M. Kardes, F. R. (2008). (Eds). *Handbook of Consumer Psychology*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Daniela, M. A. (2011). Fundamental Theories on Consumer Behaviour: An Overview of the Influences Impacting Consumer Behaviour. "*Ovidius*" University Annals, Economic Sciences Series, Volume XI, Issue 2, pp. 837-841.
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- Priest, J., Carter, S., & Statt, D. A. (2013). *Consumer Behaviour*. UK: Edinburgh Business School.
- Kopetz, C. E. et al. (2012). The dynamics of consumer behavior: A goal systemic perspective.

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- Howard, D. J., Kirmani, A., & Rajagopal, P. (Eds.) (2013). *Social Influence and Consumer Behaviour*. New York: The Psychology Press.
- Belk, R. W., Fischer, E & Kozinets R. V. (2013). *Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research*.
- Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Belk, R. W. (Ed.) (2006). *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*. USA: Edward Elgar
- Kirmani, A. (2009). The self and the brand. *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 19, 271– 275.
- Oyserman, D. (2009). Identity-based motivation and consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 19, 276–279.

Evaluation:

Internal evaluation: 25 marks

- One test of 25 marks can be in MCQ nature

Semester end examination: 75 marks

Paper Pattern: 8 questions to be set of 15 marks each, out of which 5 are to be attempted. One of them could be short notes question.



INTRODUCING CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY - I

Unit Structure :

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Historical antecedents
- 1.2 Understanding consumer behaviour: Varied theoretical approaches
 - 1.2.1 Cognitive approach
 - 1.2.2 Behavioural approach
 - 1.2.3 Social and Cultural Approach
 - 1.2.4 Emotional Approach
 - 1.2.5 Psychodynamic Approach
 - 1.2.6 Personality Approach
 - 1.2.7 Motivation Approach
 - 1.2.8 Decision-Making Approach
- 1.3 Summary
- 1.4 Questions
- 1.5 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To gain deeper insights into the historical antecedents of consumer psychology.
- To understand the various theoretical approaches to consumer behaviour.

1.1 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Consumer psychology is a field of study that examines the mental and emotional processes that influence consumer behaviour. It focuses on understanding how individuals make decisions related to purchasing, using, and disposing of goods and services, and how marketing messages and other external factors influence these decisions. Consumer psychology draws on insights from several other fields, including psychology, marketing, economics, and sociology. It examines a wide range of factors that influence consumer behaviour, such as individual differences in

personality and cognition, the social and cultural context of consumption, and the impact of advertising and other marketing messages.

The goal of consumer psychology is to help businesses and organizations better understand their target audiences, develop more effective marketing strategies and create products and services that meet consumers' needs and desires.

The study of consumer behaviour has its roots in several fields, including psychology, economics, and marketing. Here are some of the historical antecedents from each of these fields related to consumer behaviour:

1. **Psychology:** The study of consumer behaviour has its roots in the early work of psychologists like Sigmund Freud, who explored the role of unconscious desires and motives in shaping behaviour. Other psychologists like Kurt Lewin and Abraham Maslow developed theories of motivation and personality that are still relevant to understanding consumer behaviour today.
2. **Economics:** Classical economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo explored the idea of consumer power, which holds that consumers are the ultimate authorities of economic activity. Later economists like Alfred Marshall and John Maynard Keynes developed theories of consumer behaviour that emphasized the importance of factors like income, price, and availability of goods and services.
3. **Marketing:** The rise of mass production and mass marketing in the early 20th century led to a greater focus on understanding consumer behaviour. Marketing pioneers like John Wanamaker and Claude Hopkins developed methods for measuring the effectiveness of advertising and other marketing messages, and later researchers like Ernest Dichter and Vance Packard explored the psychological underpinnings of consumer behaviour.

Overall, the study of consumer behaviour has been shaped by a wide range of historical and intellectual influences and continues to evolve in response to changes in technology, culture, and society.

Various activities paved the way for two significant occurrences in the 1960s. The establishment of the American Psychological Association's Consumer Psychology Division (Division 23) in 1960 was a significant event. A dispute over who owned the field in the American Psychological Association in the late 1950s resulted in the formation of a society of practitioners and academics who were only interested in the psychological response of the consumer.

The training of the early pioneers of consumer psychology had a significant impact. The mentalist approach, which was represented by experimental psychologists like Wundt, James, and Titchener; the behavioural or mechanistic approach, which Watson and Thorndike represent; and the unique brain research approach (addressed by Freud and McDougall). Because these leaders believed that the field of psychology

needed to mature before it could be promoted for applications to the business world, early applied psychologists frequently had to conceal their interest in and research in consumer psychology from some of the leaders of the parent discipline. However, consumer psychologists at the time were not well-liked by the professional advertising community, which led to additional concerns. The practitioners believed that the scientific methods were irrelevant and that the psychologists were interfering with their work. All of this changed in the mid-1900s.

It is essential to remember that the term "consumer psychology" did not exist at that time. Instead, the work that looked at how psychological principles could be used in business was just called "applied psychology," and those who advocated for it were called "applied psychologists." The principal commitment to what might be portrayed as "shopper brain research" that occurred was named "logical promoting," followed intently by the logical investigation of individual selling. The parent-applied field of industrial psychology that these early pioneers established eventually became Division 14 of the American Psychological Association. The term "consumer psychology" was not coined until the latter half of the 1950s.

A particular interest in advertising and the ways in which advertising affected people led to the development of the field of consumer psychology. By the last 50% of the nineteenth 100 years, the promoting business was deeply grounded in the US. Its expansion as an industry coincided with this nation's industrial expansion. The first organized advertising in the United States began during the colonial era and was enhanced by the emergence of urban newspapers. As the nation extended, there was an undeniable need to expand the range of promotions. A "new industrial age" was ushered in by transportation and technology between 1850 and 1900. According to Oliver (1956), a flow in manufacturing productivity demanded the establishment of new factories, increased production, a wider range of consumer goods, and expansion into new markets. Advertising became the most important means of expanding. With the introduction of large circulation magazines like Atlantic Monthly, Colliers, Cosmopolitan, Harper's Monthly, Ladies Home Journal, McClure's, and the Saturday Evening Post, the concept and practice of national advertising also changed (Kuna, 1976). These new markets reflected new population centres.

The late 1800s saw the appearance and development of the promoting specialist, the publicizing publicist, and, consequently, the publicizing organization. Numerous ad clubs, associations, trade journals, and codes of ethics emerged as a result of the increased demand for professionalism (Wiebe, 1967). During this period, two advertising schools emerged that reflected the dominant theoretical perspectives in economics and psychology. The first school held a rational view of man—the potential customer who carefully listened to advertisements before making a purchase decision. The public was simply informed that the product was available and what it could be used for through advertising. It was perceived that the general public was sceptical and, for the most part, incapable of being persuaded to act against their better judgment. The

traditional economic theory that people are self-interested and naturally want to maximize profits while valuing their time informed this rational perspective. Of course, the accentuation was accordingly on sensible costs and essential selling focuses.

In the 1890s and early 1900s, the rational school dominated, but by 1910, the non-rational perspective had taken its place. Supporters considered it likely that the feelings of general society could be controlled and that individuals could really be convinced to buy merchandise. A psychological approach to comprehending how audiences react to advertising was much more readily accepted and accepted at this school. Additionally adding to the non-reasonable school was brain science's new accentuation on the oblivious and persuasive states (for example Freud, 1924/1969), as well as on the robotic support of conduct (e.g., Watson, 1913).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. Define the term consumer psychology
2. What is the goal of consumer psychology
3. Review the early pioneers of consumer psychology

1.2 UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: VARIED THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Consumer psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on understanding how individuals perceive, process, and respond to information and experiences related to consumer behaviour. There are several theoretical approaches within consumer psychology that help explain and predict consumer behaviour.

1.2.1 Cognitive Approach

This approach emphasizes the role of mental processes, such as perception, attention, memory, and decision-making, in shaping consumer behaviour. It explores how consumers acquire, process, and use information to make judgments and choices. In other words, it emphasizes the mental processes, thoughts, beliefs, and decision-making mechanisms that shape consumer behaviour. This approach assumes that consumers are active information processors who engage in complex mental activities to make decisions and evaluate products or services. Let us explore the details of the cognitive approach in consumer psychology:

- **Information Processing:** The cognitive approach views consumers as information processors who actively seek, interpret, and use information to make decisions. Consumers are believed to engage in a series of mental processes to evaluate and select products. These processes include attention, perception, comprehension, memory, and decision-making. Researchers study how consumers process information, the factors influencing their attention and perception, and the impact of memory and decision-making on consumer behaviour.

- **Mental Representations:** Cognitive psychologists emphasize the role of mental representations in consumer behaviour. Mental representations are internal cognitive structures that consumers develop to organize and store information about products, brands, and consumption experiences. These mental representations include product attributes, brand associations, and consumer schemas (pre-existing knowledge structures). Researchers analyze how consumers form, modify, and retrieve these mental representations, and how they influence consumer preferences and decision-making.
- **Memory and Recall:** Memory plays a crucial role in consumer behaviour. Cognitive psychologists explore how consumers encode, store, and retrieve information about products and brands. They study factors that affect memory formation and recall, such as attention, repetition, imagery, and emotional associations. Understanding how consumers remember and retrieve information helps marketers design effective communication strategies and brand messages.
- **Decision-Making Processes:** The cognitive approach investigates the decision-making processes consumers employ when choosing alternative products or brands. It examines how consumers gather and evaluate information, weigh the pros and cons, and make choices based on their cognitive processing. Researchers explore decision heuristics (mental shortcuts), cognitive biases, and decision strategies that consumers employ. They also examine the role of emotions and affect in decision-making processes.
- **Cognitive Biases:** Cognitive psychologists recognize that consumers are subject to cognitive biases, which are systematic errors in thinking that affect judgment and decision-making. These biases include confirmation bias, anchoring bias, availability heuristic, and framing effects, among others. Researchers examine how these biases influence consumer perceptions, preferences, and choices, and how marketers can address or leverage them in their strategies.
- **Consumer Attitudes and Beliefs:** The cognitive approach examines how consumers form attitudes and beliefs about products, brands, and advertising messages. It investigates the underlying cognitive processes that shape attitudes, including cognitive consistency theories, social cognition, and cognitive dissonance. Researchers study how consumers integrate new information, reconcile inconsistencies, and form stable attitudes and beliefs that influence their behaviours.
- **Problem-Solving and Consumer Behaviour:** Cognitive psychologists explore how consumers engage in problem-solving processes related to consumption. This includes identifying needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, and making decisions. Researchers analyze consumer decision-making models, such as the rational decision-making model, bounded rationality, and

prospect theory, to understand the cognitive processes involved in problem-solving and decision-making.

Overall, the cognitive approach in consumer psychology focuses on understanding the intricate cognitive processes underlying consumer behaviour. It examines how consumers process information, form attitudes and beliefs, make decisions, and solve problems related to consumption. This approach helps marketers gain insights into consumer cognition, enabling them to develop effective strategies for product development, advertising, branding, and communication.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. What is a consumer's attitude and belief?
2. What is the focus of the cognitive approach of consumer psychology?

1.2.2 Behavioural Approach

This approach emphasizes observable behaviours and how they are influenced by environmental stimuli. It focuses on understanding how consumer behaviour is shaped by rewards, punishments, conditioning, and social learning processes.

The behavioural approach in consumer psychology focuses on understanding consumer behaviour through the observation and analysis of observable actions and responses. It emphasizes the influence of external factors and the importance of learning and conditioning processes in shaping consumer behaviour. Here are some key principles and concepts associated with the behavioural approach in consumer psychology:

- **Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory:** This theory hypothesizes that consumer behaviour is a direct response to various stimuli in the environment. It suggests that marketers can influence consumer behaviour by strategically manipulating the stimuli to elicit desired responses.
- **Conditioning:** Conditioning refers to the process of learning associations between stimuli and responses. Consumer psychologists often study classical conditioning (associating a stimulus with a response) and operant conditioning (learning based on the consequences of behaviour) to understand how consumer behaviour is shaped and influenced.
- **Reinforcement:** Reinforcement is a critical concept in the behavioural approach. It involves the use of rewards or punishments to strengthen or weaken specific consumer behaviours. Positive reinforcement involves providing rewards or incentives to encourage desired consumer behaviours, while negative reinforcement involves removing negative consequences or aversive stimuli to promote desired behaviours.

- **Observational Learning:** Observational learning, also known as social learning or modelling, is another important aspect of the behavioural approach. Consumers can learn by observing the behaviour of others and imitating their actions. Marketers often utilize this concept by featuring role models or influential figures in advertisements to influence consumer behaviour.
- **Habit Formation:** Behavioural psychologists emphasize the role of habits in consumer behaviour. Habits are automatic and repetitive behaviours that are learned through repetition and reinforcement. Once established, habits can greatly influence consumer choices and purchase decisions.
- **Cognitive Processes:** While the behavioural approach primarily focuses on observable behaviour, cognitive processes play a role in shaping consumer behaviour as well. Cognitive factors such as beliefs, attitudes, and expectations can influence how consumers perceive and respond to stimuli.
- **Experimental Research:** The behavioural approach often employs experimental research methods to study consumer behaviour. Researchers manipulate variables and observe how they affect consumer responses. This approach allows for the identification of causal relationships between stimuli and consumer behaviour.

Overall, the behavioural approach in consumer psychology emphasizes the influence of external stimuli, learning processes, and conditioning on consumer behaviour. By understanding these principles, marketers can design effective strategies to influence consumer choices and preferences.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. List the key concepts and principles associated with the behavioural approach in consumer psychology.

1.2.3 Social and Cultural Approach

This approach emphasizes the influence of social and cultural factors on consumer behaviour. It examines how social norms, values, reference groups, social identities, and cultural beliefs impact consumer decision-making and consumption patterns.

The approach focuses on understanding how social and cultural factors influence consumer behaviour, attitudes, and decision-making processes. It recognizes that individuals are not isolated decision-makers but are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they live.

This approach considers that consumer behaviour is shaped by various social influences, including family, friends, peers, reference groups, and societal norms. It acknowledges that people often conform to social expectations and norms in their consumption patterns. Social factors can

include social class, group membership, social networks, and cultural values.

Cultural influences are also significant in the Social and Cultural Approach. Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, customs, and practices of a particular group or society. Cultural factors influence consumer behaviour by shaping preferences, defining acceptable behaviours, and influencing individuals' perceptions of products and brands. Cultural dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and power distance impact consumer decision-making processes.

The Social and Cultural Approach recognizes that consumers are influenced by social interactions, group dynamics, and cultural norms. It explores how these influences affect consumer attitudes, motivations, perceptions, and purchase decisions. Researchers in this approach often use qualitative research methods like focus groups and interviews to gain insights into the underlying social and cultural factors that impact consumer behaviour.

Some key concepts within the Social and Cultural Approach include social identity, reference groups, social influence, consumer socialization, acculturation, and cultural values. Social identity theory examines how individuals define their self-concept through group membership and how this influences their consumption choices. Reference groups are the groups to which individuals compare themselves and seek approval from, which leads to conformity or differentiation in their consumption behaviour. Social influence encompasses the impact of others on an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions related to consumption.

Consumer socialization refers to the process through which individuals acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to consumption from their social environment, primarily family and peers. Acculturation refers to how individuals adapt to a new culture, incorporating its values and practices into their consumer behaviour. Cultural values represent the fundamental beliefs and principles shared by a cultural group and shape consumer preferences and behaviours.

Overall, the Social and Cultural Approach in consumer psychology emphasizes the significance of social and cultural factors in understanding consumer behaviour. It provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between individuals, social influences, and cultural contexts, helping marketers and researchers better comprehend and predict consumer choices and behaviours.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. Define the following:
 - a) Acculturation
 - b) Consumer socialization
 - c) Social influence
 - d) Culture

1.2.4 Emotional Approach

This approach recognizes the role of emotions in consumer behaviour. It explores how emotional experiences, such as joy, fear, and desire, influence consumers' attitudes, preferences, and purchase decisions.

The emotional approach focuses on understanding and analyzing the role of emotions in consumer behaviour and decision-making processes. It recognizes that emotions play a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive, evaluate, and respond to marketing stimuli, products, and brands.

The emotional approach acknowledges that consumers are not purely rational decision-makers but are influenced by their emotional experiences and states. It emphasizes the idea that emotions can have a profound impact on various aspects of consumer behaviour, such as product evaluation, purchase intentions, brand loyalty, and overall satisfaction.

Key Concepts and Frameworks in the Emotional Approach:

- a. **Emotional Arousal:** This concept refers to the activation of emotions through marketing stimuli. Marketers use various strategies, such as advertising, packaging, and store atmospherics, to elicit specific emotional responses in consumers.
- b. **Emotional Valence:** Emotional valence refers to the positive or negative nature of emotions experienced by consumers. Positive emotions, such as joy, excitement, or pride, can enhance consumers' attitudes and preferences, while negative emotions, such as fear, guilt, or anger, can influence decision-making in different ways.
- c. **Emotional Contagion:** Emotions can be contagious, spreading from one person to another. Marketers aim to create positive emotional experiences among consumers and leverage social influence to amplify emotional responses through techniques like testimonials, user-generated content, and social media campaigns.
- d. **Emotional Branding:** This approach emphasizes the use of emotions to build strong and meaningful connections between consumers and brands. Emotional branding involves creating a brand identity that evokes specific emotions, aligning with consumers' values and aspirations, and establishing long-term emotional bonds.
- e. **Mood Effects:** Consumers' current mood can significantly influence their decision-making. Research has shown that positive moods can lead to more exploratory and risk-taking behaviour, while negative moods may result in more cautious and conservative choices.
- f. **Emotional Decision-Making:** Emotions can play a significant role in decision-making, sometimes even overshadowing rational considerations. Emotional decision-making theories, such as the affect-as-information model, propose that individuals rely on their

current emotional states as information when making judgments and choices.

- g. **Emotional Appeals:** Emotional appeals are persuasive techniques used in marketing and advertising to evoke specific emotions in consumers. Advertisements often use storytelling, humour, nostalgia, empathy, or other emotional triggers to create a connection and influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

The emotional approach in consumer psychology recognizes that emotions are integral to understanding consumer behaviour. By studying and influencing emotions, marketers can create more impactful and engaging experiences that resonate with consumers on a deeper, emotional level.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. **Define the following:**

- a) Emotional arousal
- b) Emotional branding
- c) Emotional valence
- d) Emotional Contagion

1.2.5 Psychodynamic Approach

This approach draws on Freudian psychology and emphasizes unconscious motives, desires, and conflicts that drive consumer behaviour. It explores how unconscious needs, wishes, and desires shape consumer choices and preferences.

It is a theoretical framework that applies principles from psychoanalysis and psychodynamic theory to understand consumer behaviour and motivations. It explores the role of unconscious desires, motives, and conflicts in shaping consumer choices and preferences.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, proposed that human behaviour is driven by unconscious processes and that people's motivations are often hidden from their conscious awareness. These motivations arise from early childhood experiences and the dynamics of the unconscious mind. The psychodynamic approach in consumer psychology draws on these ideas to explain why individuals make certain buying decisions.

According to the psychodynamic approach, consumer behaviour is influenced by three key components:

a. **Conscious Mind:** This represents the thoughts, beliefs, and desires that individuals are aware of. It includes the rational and logical aspects of decision-making, where consumers weigh various options based on their conscious evaluation of product features, benefits, and costs.

b. **Preconscious Mind:** This refers to thoughts and memories that are not immediately conscious but can be readily accessed and brought into awareness. In the context of consumer psychology, preconscious processes

may involve the retrieval of information from memory, such as past experiences with products or brands that influence present purchasing decisions.

c. **Unconscious Mind:** This represents the deepest and least accessible part of the mind, containing hidden desires, fears, and unresolved conflicts. The unconscious mind plays a significant role in consumer behaviour, as it influences individuals' motivations and preferences in ways they may not consciously understand. For example, consumers may be driven by unconscious desires for status, acceptance, or security, which can shape their brand choices and consumption patterns.

The psychodynamic approach also emphasizes the importance of symbolic meanings and the interpretation of products and brands. Consumers often project their unconscious desires, fantasies, and emotions onto products, using them as symbols to satisfy deep-seated psychological needs. Marketers capitalize on these symbolic associations by employing various techniques such as brand imagery, advertising narratives, and celebrity endorsements to create emotional connections with consumers.

Critics of the psychodynamic approach argue that it relies heavily on subjective interpretations and lacks empirical evidence. Nonetheless, it remains a valuable framework for understanding the underlying psychological processes that influence consumer behaviour and can offer insights into consumer motivations, brand loyalty, and the formation of consumer identities.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. What does the psychodynamic approach emphasize?

1.2.6 Personality Approach

This approach focuses on individual differences in personality traits and how they influence consumer behaviour. It examines how traits like extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness relate to consumer preferences, brand choices, and consumption patterns.

The emphasizes the understanding of how an individual's personality traits influence their consumer behaviour. It explores the psychological characteristics that shape consumers' preferences, decision-making processes, and purchase patterns.

Key concepts in the personality approach include:

- a. **Personality Traits:** Personality traits refer to enduring patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours that distinguish individuals from one another. Researchers in consumer psychology often examine traits such as extraversion, introversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. These traits are believed to influence consumers' attitudes, motivations, and buying behaviour.

- b. **Consumer Motivation:** Personality traits play a crucial role in determining consumer motivations. For example, individuals with a high need for achievement may be motivated by product quality and status symbols, while those with a high need for affiliation may seek social acceptance through their purchases. Understanding these motivations helps marketers tailor their messages and offerings to target specific consumer segments effectively.
- c. **Brand Personality:** Brand personality refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Consumers often attribute personality traits to brands, and these traits influence their perceptions, preferences, and loyalty. For instance, a brand can be seen as sophisticated, adventurous, or reliable, which resonates with specific consumer personalities. Aligning brand personality with target consumers enhances brand-consumer relationships.
- d. **Consumer Decision-Making:** Personality traits influence consumers' decision-making processes. Traits such as risk aversion, impulsivity, or need for cognition impact how individuals gather and process information, evaluate alternatives, and make purchase decisions. Marketers can tailor their messaging and strategies to match consumers' decision-making styles based on their personality traits.
- e. **Consumer Segmentation:** The personality approach allows for the segmentation of consumers based on their personality traits. By identifying distinct personality profiles within a target market, marketers can develop customized marketing strategies that appeal to specific segments. This approach recognizes that consumers with similar personalities may have shared preferences and respond differently to marketing efforts.
- f. **Consumer Satisfaction and Loyalty:** Personality traits also influence consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Consumers with specific personality traits may have higher expectations, seek unique experiences, or prioritize certain attributes. Understanding these traits helps marketers deliver personalized experiences that result in higher satisfaction and loyalty.

The personality approach in consumer psychology emphasizes the role of individual differences in shaping consumer behaviour. By considering consumers' personalities, marketers can better understand their motivations, preferences, and decision-making processes, allowing for more effective marketing strategies and improved consumer satisfaction.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. What does the personality approach consumer behaviour focus on?
2. Which traits are believed to influence a consumer's attitude?
3. Define consumer segmentation

1.2.7 Motivational Approach

This approach explores the underlying motivations that drive consumer behaviour. It investigates consumers' needs, desires, and goals and how they influence product and brand choices.

The motivational approach in consumer psychology refers to the study of the underlying psychological processes that motivate individuals to engage in consumer behaviour. It explores the various factors that drive individuals to make purchasing decisions and the psychological mechanisms behind these motivations.

Motivation is a fundamental aspect of consumer behaviour as it influences why people buy certain products or services and how they derive satisfaction from their purchases. The motivational approach seeks to understand the internal drives, needs, desires, and goals that lead individuals to engage in consumer activities.

Key Concepts in the Motivational Approach:

- a. **Needs and Wants:** The motivational approach emphasizes the role of needs and wants in consumer behaviour. Needs are the basic physiological or psychological requirements that individuals seek to fulfill, such as the need for food, shelter, or social belonging. Wants, on the other hand, are specific desires that emerge from individual preferences and cultural influences.
- b. Consumer psychologists identify different types of motivation that drive consumer behaviour. These include intrinsic motivation (driven by personal satisfaction or enjoyment), extrinsic motivation (driven by external rewards or incentives), and social motivation (influenced by social factors and the desire for acceptance or status).
- c. **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** The motivational approach often refers to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which suggests that individuals have a set of hierarchical needs that they seek to fulfill. According to this theory, people start by fulfilling their basic physiological needs (e.g., food, water), then progress to safety needs (e.g., security, stability), social needs (e.g., relationships, belongingness), esteem needs (e.g., recognition, self-esteem), and finally, self-actualization needs (e.g., personal growth, self-fulfillment).
- d. **Goals and Goal-Directed Behaviour:** Consumer behaviour is often driven by goals individuals aim to achieve through their purchases. Goals can be specific (e.g., buying a new car) or more abstract (e.g., improving one's social status). The motivational approach examines how goals are formed, how they influence consumer decision-making processes, and how the achievement of goals leads to consumer satisfaction.

- e. **Emotions and Affect:** Motivations are closely linked to emotions and affective states. Consumer psychologists recognize that emotions can play a significant role in motivating consumer behaviour. Positive emotions, such as happiness or excitement, can drive individuals to seek out products or services that enhance their well-being. Negative emotions, such as fear or sadness, can also influence consumer behaviour by prompting individuals to address or alleviate their negative experiences through consumption.

Understanding the motivational factors behind consumer behaviour helps marketers and advertisers tailor their strategies to appeal to consumers' needs, wants, and goals. By understanding what drives individuals to make purchase decisions, businesses can develop effective marketing campaigns, product designs, and messaging that resonates with their target audience.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. Why is motivation considered to be a fundamental aspect of consumer behaviour?
2. How do positive and negative emotions influence consumer behaviour?

1.2.8 Decision-Making Approach

This approach focuses on understanding the cognitive processes involved in consumer decision-making. It examines how consumers gather information, evaluate alternatives, and make choices, considering factors like decision heuristics, biases, and risk perception.

Consumer psychology encompasses various approaches to understanding and predicting consumer behaviour, including decision-making processes. One prominent approach in consumer psychology is the cognitive decision-making approach, which focuses on how individuals gather, process, and evaluate information to make decisions. Here is an overview of the cognitive decision-making approach in consumer psychology:

- a. **Information Processing:** According to this approach, consumers engage in an information-processing system when making decisions. They acquire information from various sources such as personal experiences, advertisements, recommendations, and reviews. The information is processed through attention, perception, and memory.
- b. **Decision-Making Models:** Researchers have proposed several decision-making models to explain how consumers make choices. One well-known model is the Multi-Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT), which suggests that consumers evaluate alternatives based on multiple attributes and make decisions by assessing the overall utility or value.
- c. **Decision Heuristics:** Consumers often employ heuristics or mental shortcuts to simplify decision-making. For instance, they may rely on brand loyalty, price as an indicator of quality, or social proof (e.g.,

following others' recommendations). These heuristics can influence consumer choices and lead to biases or suboptimal decisions.

- d. **Cognitive Biases:** Cognitive biases are systematic errors in thinking that influence decision-making. For example, confirmation bias occurs when individuals selectively seek or interpret information that confirms their existing beliefs or preferences. Anchoring bias refers to the tendency to rely heavily on the initial piece of information encountered when making judgments or estimates.
- e. **Decision-Making Context:** Consumer decisions are influenced by various contextual factors, such as situational cues, social norms, and cultural influences. The decision-making approach acknowledges the importance of these external factors in shaping consumer choices.
- f. **Post-Decision Evaluation:** After making a purchase, consumers engage in post-decision evaluation to assess satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their choices. This evaluation can influence future decision-making and brand loyalty.

Overall, the cognitive decision-making approach in consumer psychology emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in acquiring, processing, and evaluating information to make choices. It recognizes the role of heuristics, biases, and contextual factors in shaping consumer decisions, and highlights the importance of post-decision evaluation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. What does the cognitive decision-making approach focus on?
2. Define confirmation bias and anchoring bias.
3. What are decision heuristics?

1.3 SUMMARY

Consumer psychology is the study of how individuals make decisions and behave as consumers. It combines principles from psychology, marketing, and economics to understand and influence consumer behaviour.

The above-mentioned theoretical approaches provide frameworks for understanding various aspects of consumer psychology. Researchers often combine multiple approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour in different contexts.

Consumer behaviour is often influenced by decision-making processes, motivation and needs, attitudes and beliefs, perception and cognition, social influence, emotions and decision-making, decision heuristics and biases, consumer segmentation, customer satisfaction and loyalty, and ethical considerations.

Consumer psychology provides valuable insights into the motivations, behaviours, and decision-making processes of consumers. By understanding these psychological factors, businesses can develop more

effective marketing strategies, improve customer experiences, and build stronger relationships with their target audience.

1.4 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the historical antecedents related to consumer behaviour.
2. Discuss and describe the important aspects of the cognitive approach of consumer psychology.
3. Explain in detail the key principles and concepts of the behavioural approach of consumer psychology.
4. What is the social and cultural approach of consumer psychology?
5. How can mood effects and emotional decision-making affect consumer behaviour?
6. What are the three main components of the psychodynamic approach to consumer behaviour?
7. Describe the personality approach of consumer behaviour.
8. Discuss in detail the decision-making approach of cognitive psychology.

1.5 REFERENCES

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INTRODUCING CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY - II

Unit Structure :

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Methodological issues in understanding consumer behaviour
 - 2.1.1 Definition of consumer behaviour
 - 2.1.2 Challenges in the study of consumer behaviour
 - 2.1.3 Methodological issues
- 2.2 Consumer society in the twenty-first century
- 2.3 Summary
- 2.4 Questions
- 2.5 References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To define consumer behaviour
- To understand the challenges and methodological issues in the study of consumer psychology/consumer behaviour
- To gain insight to resolve the issues and challenges while studying consumer psychology/ behaviour

2.1 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

In Unit 1, we studied the historical antecedents of understanding consumer behaviour along with various theoretical approaches to it that included cognitive approach, behavioural approach, social and cultural approach, emotional approach, psychodynamic approach, personality approach, motivation approach, and decision-making approach. In this unit, we are going to study some methodological issues in understanding consumer behaviour and what is consumer society in the twenty-first century like. So let us begin the unit by learning the definition of consumer behaviour.

2.1.1 Definition of consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour refers to the study and understanding of how individuals, groups, or organizations make decisions and engage in activities related to acquiring, using, and disposing of goods, services, ideas, or experiences. It encompasses the entire process by which

consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives, make purchase decisions, and post-purchase evaluations.

Consumer behaviour is influenced by various factors, including psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors. These factors shape consumers' needs, wants, and preferences, and ultimately determine their choices and behaviours in the marketplace. Understanding consumer behaviour is crucial for businesses as it helps them develop effective marketing strategies, design products and services, and create satisfying customer experiences.

By studying consumer behaviour, marketers can gain insights into consumers' needs, motivations, and decision-making processes, allowing them to create effective marketing strategies, tailor products to specific target markets, and build strong relationships with customers.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. Define consumer behaviour.
2. What is the benefit of studying consumer behaviour?

2.1.2 Challenges in the study of consumer behaviour

The study of consumer behaviour is a complex field that investigates the various factors that influence individuals and groups in making purchasing decisions. While it offers valuable insights into understanding consumer preferences and behaviours, there are several challenges researchers face in conducting research in this area.

Some of these challenges include:

- a. **Subjectivity and Complexity:** Consumer behaviour is inherently subjective and influenced by numerous factors, including personal beliefs, cultural values, and individual experiences. Understanding and measuring these subjective elements can be challenging for researchers, as consumer behaviour is often a complex interplay of conscious and unconscious motivations.
- b. **Changing Consumer Trends:** Consumer behaviour is not fixed but constantly evolving due to changing trends, technological advancements, and societal influences. Keeping up with the dynamic nature of consumer behaviour requires researchers to continually update their knowledge and adapt their research methodologies accordingly.
- c. **Access to Data:** Gathering accurate and reliable data on consumer behaviour can be challenging. Researchers may face difficulties in obtaining access to relevant data sources, especially when it involves sensitive information or proprietary data held by companies. Additionally, the sheer volume of data available can be overwhelming, requiring researchers to employ advanced data analysis techniques to derive meaningful insights.

- d. **Ethical Considerations:** Conducting research on consumer behaviour involves ethical considerations, particularly regarding privacy and informed consent. Researchers must ensure that they adhere to ethical guidelines and obtain informed consent from participants when collecting data. They also need to protect the confidentiality of personal information and handle data in a responsible and secure manner.
- e. **Sample Selection and Generalizability:** Selecting an appropriate sample for consumer behaviour research is crucial to ensure the findings are representative of the target population. However, recruiting a diverse and representative sample can be challenging, especially when studying niche markets or specific consumer segments. The limited sample size and characteristics of the participants may affect the generalizability of the findings to a broader population.
- f. **Influence of Social Desirability Bias:** Social desirability bias refers to participants' tendency to provide responses they believe are socially acceptable or desirable, rather than expressing their true opinions or behaviours. Researchers need to account for and minimize this bias to obtain accurate and reliable data on consumer behaviour.
- g. **Technological Advancements:** Rapid advancements in technology, such as the rise of e-commerce, social media, and mobile applications, have significantly impacted consumer behaviour. However, these technological changes also pose challenges for researchers in understanding and analyzing these new forms of consumer engagement, as well as adapting research methodologies to capture these evolving behaviours.
- h. **Cross-cultural Variations:** Consumer behaviour varies across cultures and societies, and conducting cross-cultural research can be complex. Researchers need to consider cultural shades, language barriers, and differences in consumer preferences, attitudes, and values when studying consumer behaviour across different countries or regions.

Addressing these challenges requires researchers in consumer behaviour to employ interdisciplinary approaches, influence advanced research methodologies, and stay updated with the latest trends and technologies. Collaboration between academia and industry can also help bridge the gap between theory and practice, leading to more effective research outcomes.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. State the various challenges faced in studying consumer behaviour.
2. What is the social conformity bias?

2.1.3 Methodological issues in the study of consumer psychology

Understanding consumer behaviour is a complex task that involves various methodological challenges. Some of the key methodological issues in studying consumer behaviour include:

1. Sampling Bias:

Obtaining a representative sample of consumers is crucial for drawing accurate conclusions. However, sampling bias can occur if the sample is not truly representative of the target population. For example, if a study only includes participants from a specific demographic or geographic area, the findings may not be applicable to the broader population.

Sampling bias in understanding consumer psychology refers to the systematic error that occurs when the sample of consumers studied does not accurately represent the target population of interest. It can lead to misleading or inaccurate conclusions about consumer behaviour and preferences. Sampling bias can arise in various ways and can significantly impact the validity and generalizability of research findings in consumer psychology.

Here are a few common types of sampling bias that can occur in understanding consumer psychology:

- a. **Non-Probability Sampling Bias:** When researchers do not use random sampling methods and instead rely on convenience sampling or self-selection, it can introduce biases. For example, if a study recruits participants solely from a specific location or through online surveys, it may not represent the broader population accurately.
- b. **Response Bias:** This bias occurs when participants provide responses that they perceive as socially desirable or that align with their perceived expectations of the researchers' intentions. It can lead to distorted or inaccurate data if respondents are not fully honest or provide biased answers.
- c. **Sample Selection Bias:** This bias can occur when researchers selectively include or exclude certain segments of the population in their study. If specific demographic groups or consumer segments are underrepresented or overrepresented, the findings may not be applicable to the broader population.
- d. **Voluntary Response Bias:** When participation in a study is voluntary, individuals who choose to participate may have different characteristics, attitudes, or motivations compared to those who do not. This can introduce biases, as the sample may not be representative of the target population.
- e. **Cultural Bias:** Consumer psychology research that focuses predominantly on a single cultural group or geographical region may exhibit cultural bias. Consumer behaviours, attitudes, and preferences

can vary significantly across cultures, and failing to consider this diversity can limit the generalizability of the findings.

- f. **Time-Period Bias:** Consumer preferences and behaviours can change over time due to various factors such as societal trends, economic conditions, or technological advancements. If a study does not account for these temporal changes, the findings may not accurately reflect the current consumer landscape.

To mitigate sampling bias in consumer psychology research, researchers should strive for random sampling methods, ensure diverse representation, and use appropriate statistical techniques to account for potential biases. It is crucial to consider the limitations and potential biases in any study's sample to interpret the findings accurately and make valid inferences about consumer behaviour.

2. Self-Report Bias:

Consumer behaviour research often relies on self-reported data, such as surveys or interviews. However, self-reporting is subject to biases and inaccuracies. Respondents may provide socially desirable answers, have imperfect recall, or misinterpret the questions, leading to distorted or incomplete information.

Self-report bias is a potential limitation in understanding consumer psychology that arises when individuals provide subjective information about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. It refers to the tendency of people to provide inaccurate or incomplete information in self-reports due to various factors, including social desirability, memory limitations, and cognitive biases.

In the context of consumer psychology, self-report bias can impact the accuracy and reliability of data collected through surveys, interviews, questionnaires, and other self-report methods. Consumers may unintentionally or intentionally misrepresent their attitudes, preferences, intentions, or past behaviours, leading to biased or inaccurate results.

Here are a few common types of self-report bias in understanding consumer psychology:

- a. **Social Desirability Bias:** Individuals tend to provide responses that are socially acceptable or perceived favourably by others, rather than expressing their true opinions or behaviours. This bias can be particularly prevalent when sensitive or socially stigmatized topics are involved, such as purchasing habits or personal finances.
- b. **Memory Bias:** People's recollections of past experiences, purchases, or preferences may be faulty or influenced by various factors, such as selective memory or recall bias. This bias can lead to inaccuracies when consumers report their past behaviours or preferences.

- c. **Response Set Bias:** Respondents may exhibit a tendency to consistently respond in a particular pattern or manner across questions, such as always selecting the middle option or choosing extreme responses. This bias can result from acquiescence bias (agreeing with statements without much thought) or extreme response bias (consistently selecting extreme options).
- d. **Halo Effect:** The halo effect occurs when an overall positive or negative impression of a product, brand, or experience influences respondents' evaluations of specific attributes or features. This bias can distort the accuracy of consumer perceptions or judgments.
- e. **Confirmation Bias:** Consumers may have preexisting beliefs or expectations, which can lead them to selectively interpret or recall information that confirms their existing views. This bias can affect how consumers report their attitudes or preferences, skewing the results.

To mitigate self-report bias in understanding consumer psychology, researchers often employ various strategies. These include using multiple research methods, triangulating data from different sources, employing experimental designs, and combining self-report data with behavioural measures or observational studies. Researchers also strive to create a comfortable and non-judgmental environment for respondents and use carefully constructed questions to minimize biases.

Overall, while self-report methods provide valuable insights into consumer psychology, researchers should be aware of the potential biases and limitations associated with self-reported data and employ rigorous methodologies to ensure accurate and reliable results.

3. Researcher Bias:

The researcher's own biases and perspectives can influence the design, data collection, and interpretation of consumer behaviour studies. It is important to minimize such biases and maintain objectivity throughout the research process.

Researcher bias in the study of consumer psychology refers to the systematic errors or distortions that can occur during the research process due to the personal beliefs, values, assumptions, or preferences of the researchers involved. It can influence various aspects of the research, including study design, data collection, data interpretation, and reporting of results. Researcher bias can arise both consciously and unconsciously and may significantly impact the validity and reliability of the findings.

Here are a few common forms of researcher bias that can affect studies in consumer psychology:

- a. **Confirmation bias:** Researchers may have preconceived notions or hypotheses about consumer behaviour and tend to favour evidence that

confirms their beliefs while ignoring or downplaying contradictory information.

- b. **Expectation bias:** Researchers' expectations or desires for certain outcomes may influence their observations, leading to unintentional biases in data collection or interpretation.
- c. **Sampling bias:** Researchers may select participants or samples that are not representative of the target population, which can limit the generalizability of findings.
- d. **Social desirability bias:** Respondents may alter their responses to conform to socially desirable norms or expectations, leading to skewed or inaccurate data.
- e. **Reporting bias:** Researchers may selectively report or emphasize findings that support their hypotheses or desired conclusions while disregarding or minimizing results that do not align with their expectations.

To mitigate researcher bias in consumer psychology research, various measures can be taken. These include:

- a. **Pre-registration:** Researchers can publicly register their study designs, hypotheses, and analysis plans in advance, ensuring transparency and reducing the possibility of selectively reporting results.
- b. **Blind procedures:** Implementing double-blind or single-blind methodologies, where neither the researchers nor the participants know the experimental conditions, can help reduce biases in data collection and interpretation.
- c. **Diverse research teams:** Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and diversity within research teams can bring different perspectives and reduce the influence of individual biases.
- d. **Peer review:** Submitting research findings to rigorous peer review processes can help identify and address potential biases before publication.
- e. **Transparency and replication:** Providing detailed descriptions of research methods and materials allows others to replicate the study, facilitating the detection of biases and increasing the overall robustness of the research.

By being aware of researcher biases and implementing these strategies, researchers can strive to minimize their impact and enhance the reliability and validity of their findings in consumer psychology.

4. Lack of Generalizability:

Consumer behaviour can vary across individuals, cultures, and contexts. Findings from a particular study may not be universally applicable, and generalizing the results to different populations or situations should be done cautiously. Replication studies and cross-cultural research can help mitigate this issue.

Lack of generalizability is a methodological issue in the study of consumer psychology when the findings or conclusions from a particular study cannot be reliably applied to a broader population or real-world settings. It refers to the limited ability to generalize research findings beyond the specific context, sample, or conditions in which the study was conducted. This issue undermines the external validity of the research and can hinder its practical application and relevance.

Several factors contribute to the lack of generalizability in consumer psychology studies:

- a. **Sample characteristics:** If the study sample is not representative of the target population, the findings may not be applicable to the broader consumer population. For example, if a study focuses on a specific demographic group or a restricted geographical area, it may not reflect the diversity of consumer behaviours and preferences in other contexts.
- b. **Research context:** The context in which the study is conducted can influence consumer behaviour. For instance, conducting a study in a laboratory setting may not capture the complexities and nuances of real-world consumer decision-making. The artificial environment might lead to different behaviours or responses compared to a natural setting, reducing generalizability.
- c. **Methodological limitations:** Methodological choices, such as study design, measurement tools, and data collection methods, can affect generalizability. For instance, relying solely on self-report measures may introduce biases and inaccuracies. Additionally, using convenience sampling methods or small sample sizes may limit the generalizability of findings to larger populations.
- d. **Cultural and contextual factors:** Consumer behaviour can be influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors that vary across different populations and contexts. Therefore, studies conducted in one cultural or geographical setting may not fully capture consumer behaviours and attitudes in another culture or context.

Addressing the lack of generalizability requires researchers to consider and balance various factors. They can strive for representative and diverse samples, use multiple research contexts (e.g., field experiments, naturalistic observations), employ rigorous research designs, and consider

cultural and contextual factors. Replication studies across different populations and contexts can also help validate and generalize findings.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of any single study and interpret its findings with caution, recognizing that they may not be universally applicable. A cumulative body of research that addresses different populations, contexts, and methodologies can contribute to a better understanding of consumer psychology and improve the generalizability of its findings.

5. Limited External Validity:

Many consumer behaviour studies are conducted in controlled environments, such as laboratories or simulated shopping scenarios. While these settings offer control over variables, they may not fully reflect real-world consumer behaviour. Findings from artificial settings may not accurately capture the complexities of consumer decision-making in natural environments.

Limited external validity refers to a methodological issue in studying consumer behaviour where the findings or conclusions of a study may not be generalizable or applicable to a broader population or real-world settings. It occurs when the conditions, participants, or contexts of a study are not representative of the target population or the actual consumer behaviour being studied.

Several factors can contribute to limited external validity in consumer behaviour research:

- a. **Sample characteristics:** If the participants in a study are not representative of the target population, the findings may not be applicable to the broader consumer population. For example, if a study only includes college students as participants, the results may not be generalizable to consumers of different age groups or backgrounds.
- b. **Contextual factors:** The settings or conditions in which the study takes place may differ from real-world consumer environments. For instance, conducting a consumer behaviour study in a controlled laboratory setting may not accurately reflect how consumers behave in their natural shopping environments.
- c. **Artificial stimuli:** In some studies, researchers may use artificial stimuli or scenarios that do not accurately replicate real-world consumer decision-making situations. This can limit the external validity of the findings because consumer behaviour can be influenced by various complex and dynamic factors that are not adequately captured in controlled experimental settings.
- d. **Time constraints:** Consumer behaviour can change over time due to various factors such as technological advancements, cultural shifts, economic changes, and evolving consumer preferences. If a study is

conducted over a limited time period, the findings may not be true in different time periods, reducing the external validity.

To address limited external validity in consumer behaviour research, researchers can employ various strategies:

- a. **Representative sampling:** Ensuring that the participants in a study represent the characteristics of the target population can enhance external validity. Random sampling techniques can help achieve a more diverse and representative sample.
- b. **Real-world settings:** Conducting studies in naturalistic settings, such as retail stores or online marketplaces, can provide a more realistic context for studying consumer behaviour. Observational studies or field experiments can help capture behaviour in authentic environments.
- c. **Ecological validity:** Using stimuli, scenarios, or tasks that closely resemble real-life consumer situations can improve the external validity of the findings. This may involve employing real products, advertisements, or decision-making scenarios that consumers commonly encounter.
- d. **Longitudinal studies:** Examining consumer behaviour over an extended period can account for temporal variations and help capture changes in behaviour over time. Longitudinal designs allow researchers to observe how consumer behaviour evolves in response to various influences.

It is important for researchers to acknowledge and discuss the limitations of external validity when interpreting and generalizing the findings of their studies. By carefully considering the methodological issues related to external validity, researchers can strive to enhance the applicability and relevance of their findings to real-world consumer behaviour.

6. Ethical Concerns:

Ethical considerations are crucial when studying consumer behaviour. Researchers must ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent of participants. The use of deceptive practices or manipulation of consumer behaviour without their knowledge and consent raises ethical concerns.

The study of consumer behaviour raises several ethical concerns, particularly in relation to research methods, data collection, and marketing practices. Here are some key ethical concerns associated with the study of consumer behaviour:

- a. **Privacy:** Researchers need to consider the privacy of individuals when collecting data. In today's digital age, consumer data is often collected through various channels, including online tracking, social media monitoring, and data brokerage. Ethical concerns arise when data is

collected without informed consent or when individuals' personally identifiable information is exposed or misused.

- b. **Informed Consent:** Researchers must obtain informed consent from participants before conducting studies. Participants should be fully aware of the purpose of the study, the data being collected, and how it will be used. Consent should be voluntary, without coercion, and participants should have the right to withdraw at any time.
- c. **Deception:** Some consumer behaviour studies involve deception, where participants are misled about the true purpose of the study or the manipulation of variables. While this practice can provide valuable insights, it raises ethical concerns regarding the potential harm or stress it may cause to participants.
- d. **Manipulative Marketing:** Consumer behaviour research is often used to inform marketing strategies. Ethical concerns arise when research findings are used to manipulate consumers or exploit their vulnerabilities. Manipulative marketing tactics, such as false advertising, misleading claims, or using psychological techniques to influence behaviour, can deceive consumers and undermine their autonomy.
- e. **Stereotyping and Discrimination:** Consumer behaviour research may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes or lead to discriminatory practices. If research findings are used to target or exclude certain groups based on race, gender, age, or other protected characteristics, it raises ethical concerns related to fairness, equality, and social justice.
- f. **Data Security:** As consumer data is collected and stored, researchers and organizations have a responsibility to protect that data from unauthorized access, breaches, or misuse. Adequate security measures must be in place to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of consumer information.
- g. **Reporting and Publication Bias:** Ethical concerns can arise when researchers selectively report or publish only favourable or significant findings while disregarding or suppressing contradictory or insignificant results. This can lead to biased conclusions and misrepresentation of the actual state of consumer behaviour.
- h. **Conflict of Interest:** Researchers studying consumer behaviour may have ties to commercial entities or marketing agencies, creating potential conflicts of interest. It is essential for researchers to disclose any affiliations or financial interests that may influence the objectivity of their research.

To address these ethical concerns, researchers and practitioners should adhere to ethical guidelines and professional codes of conduct, prioritize transparency, obtain informed consent, protect privacy and data security,

and promote the responsible and ethical use of consumer behaviour research for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

7. Longitudinal Challenges:

Understanding consumer behaviour often requires studying changes over time. However, conducting longitudinal studies can be challenging due to practical constraints, participant attrition, and the potential influence of external factors that can confound the results.

The study of consumer behaviour involves examining how individuals, groups, or organizations make decisions to satisfy their needs and wants through the consumption of goods and services. Longitudinal studies in consumer behaviour aim to understand consumer behaviours and preferences over an extended period, often by collecting data at multiple time points. Some of the longitudinal concerns related to the study of consumer behaviour include:

- a. **Change over time:** Longitudinal studies allow researchers to track changes in consumer behaviour over time. This includes changes in preferences, attitudes, decision-making processes, and purchasing patterns. Understanding how these behaviours evolve can provide valuable insights into consumer trends and market dynamics.
- b. **External influences:** Longitudinal studies enable researchers to examine the impact of external factors on consumer behaviour. These factors can include economic conditions, cultural shifts, technological advancements, regulatory changes, and social influences. By studying consumer behaviour over an extended period, researchers can identify how external influences shape consumer choices.
- c. **Life stages and transitions:** Longitudinal studies provide an opportunity to explore how consumer behaviour varies across different life stages and major life transitions. Individuals' needs, preferences, and consumption patterns often change as they age, start a family, enter different income brackets, or experience other significant life events. Understanding these shifts is crucial for marketers and businesses to tailor their strategies effectively.
- d. **Habit formation and behaviour reinforcement:** Longitudinal studies can shed light on the development of consumer habits and how behaviours become ingrained over time. Researchers can examine the processes of habit formation, reinforcement, and potential behavioural changes. This understanding can be valuable for businesses seeking to influence consumer behaviour and promote brand loyalty.
- e. **Brand loyalty and customer retention:** Longitudinal studies provide insights into the factors that drive brand loyalty and customer retention. By tracking consumers' purchasing behaviour over time, researchers can identify patterns related to brand switching, repeat

purchases, and brand advocacy. This information helps businesses develop strategies to enhance customer loyalty and retention.

- f. **Consumer decision-making processes:** Longitudinal studies allow researchers to explore how consumers' decision-making processes evolve and adapt over time. This includes examining factors such as information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions, and post-purchase evaluation. By understanding the dynamics of consumer decision-making, businesses can tailor marketing messages and interventions accordingly.
- g. **Market dynamics and competition:** Longitudinal studies can provide insights into market dynamics and competitive landscapes. By observing changes in consumer behaviour, market share, and preferences over time, researchers can understand how consumer choices influence market trends and the success of different products or services. This information is crucial for businesses to stay competitive and make informed strategic decisions.

Overall, longitudinal studies in consumer behaviour offer valuable insights into how consumer preferences, habits, and decision-making processes evolve over time. These studies provide a deeper understanding of the factors that shape consumer behaviour and help businesses develop effective marketing strategies to meet consumer needs and wants.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

1. What is sampling bias?
2. List the different types of sampling bias.
3. Define
 - Self-report bias
 - Halo effect
 - Response set effect
 - Memory bias
 - Confirmation bias
4. What is researcher bias?
5. List the factors that contribute to a lack of generality in consumer psychology.

2.2 CONSUMER SOCIETY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Consumer society in the twenty-first century refers to a socio-economic system characterized by the dominant role of consumption in people's lives and the overall structure of society. It is a term that describes the culture and patterns of behaviour where individuals' identities and social status are often defined by their consumption choices and material possessions.

In the twenty-first century, consumer society has been shaped by several key factors:

1. Globalization: The increasing interconnectedness of the world has facilitated the flow of goods, services, and information, leading to the expansion of consumer choices. People now have access to a wide range of products from different parts of the world, enabling them to express their individuality and preferences through consumption.

2. Technological advancements: The rapid development of technology, particularly the internet and digital platforms, has transformed the way consumers interact with products and brands. E-commerce and online shopping have become widespread, providing convenience and accessibility to consumers, allowing them to make purchases anytime and anywhere.

3. Marketing and advertising: Consumer society is heavily influenced by advertising and marketing strategies that aim to create desires and shape consumer preferences. Through sophisticated marketing techniques, companies create and promote brands that symbolize certain lifestyles, values, and aspirations, enticing consumers to associate themselves with these images.

4. Materialism and conspicuous consumption: Material possessions have become symbols of success, status, and identity in consumer society. The acquisition and display of luxury goods or products with prestigious brands are often used as a means of self-expression and social validation. Conspicuous consumption, or the public display of wealth and consumption, is prevalent, where individuals seek recognition and admiration through their possessions.

5. Emotional and experiential consumption: Alongside material possessions, there has been a growing emphasis on the emotional and experiential aspects of consumption. Consumers increasingly seek experiences, such as travel, entertainment, and unique events, as a way to enhance their well-being, social connections, and personal growth.

6. Sustainable consumption: Consumer society in the twenty-first century is also witnessing a growing awareness of environmental sustainability. Many consumers are concerned about the social and environmental impact of their consumption choices and are actively seeking products and brands that align with their values, such as those promoting sustainability, ethical sourcing, and responsible production practices.

Consumer society in the twenty-first century has both positive and negative implications. On one hand, it provides individuals with access to diverse products, personalized experiences, and opportunities for self-expression. On the other hand, it can contribute to overconsumption, debt, and environmental degradation. Understanding consumer psychology within this context is crucial for businesses, policymakers, and individuals to navigate the complexities of consumer society while considering its social, economic, and environmental consequences.

2.3 SUMMARY

When studying consumer behaviour, researchers often encounter several methodological issues that can impact the validity and reliability of their findings. Some key methodological issues that are commonly faced in consumer behaviour research are sample selection bias, self-report bias, lack of generalizability, ethical concerns, and longitudinal studies.

Addressing these methodological issues requires careful planning, appropriate research design, rigorous data collection and analysis techniques, and transparent reporting of findings. Researchers must consider the limitations and potential biases in their studies to enhance the validity and generalizability of their research in the field of consumer behaviour. Combining multiple research methods, employing diverse samples, and conducting studies in real-world settings can enhance the understanding of consumer behaviour.

2.4 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the different types of sampling bias.
2. How can sampling bias be mitigated?
3. What strategies can be used to reduce the effects of self-report bias?
4. Describe the different forms of researcher bias and different measures that can be taken to reduce such bias.
5. What is a lack of generalizability?
6. Define limited external validity.
7. What are the ethical concerns associated with the study of consumer psychology?
8. Discuss the longitudinal challenges in the study of consumer behaviour.
9. Write a note on consumer society in the 21st century?

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR – I

Unit Structure :

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Implicit Consumer Cognition
 - 3.2.1 Implicit Measures
 - 3.2.2 Implicit Process
- 3.3 The Nature and Role of Affect in Consumer Behaviour
 - 3.3.1. Physiological and cognitive antecedents of emotion
 - 3.3.2. Memory for the Affective Experiences
 - 3.3.3. The Role of the Affect in Consumer Judgement And Decision-making
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 Questions
- 3.6 References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

To understand implicit consumer cognition.

- To know the subliminal presentation of stimuli and more overt priming effects.
- To study the nature and role of affect in consumer behaviour.
- To know the structure and assessment of affect.
- To understand the role of affect in consumer judgement and decision-making.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The advertising proved its universality in the daily life of consumers in 1957. Also, the advertisers were scheming to deprive consumers of their free will by advertising to the subconscious. James M. Vicary and Francis Thayer had announced that they presented messages such as “Eat

popcorn” and “Drink Coca-Cola” for a duration of 1/3000th of a second, well below the threshold for conscious perception, during movie screenings. According to Vicary and Thayer, this subliminal persuasion technique increased popcorn sales by 57.5% and cola sales by 18.1%. Some unseen stimuli allegedly influenced consumers to buy more snacks at the movies.

The implications were so overwhelming that politicians also could use subliminal advertising to get elected; anyone who had enough money to subliminally advertise on television could make an unsuspecting public do their request. Even a suspecting public might be susceptible to subliminal advertising, since there would be no way to know whether advertisements were being played.

No advertising- or consumer-related claim has captured the public imagination quite like the notion that consumers can be persuaded outside of their conscious awareness to buy. Vance Packard’s (1957) best-seller “The Hidden Persuaders”, described immoral tricks used by marketing and advertising professionals designed to appeal to consumers’ unconscious needs and desires. Published only two years later, Haber’s (1959) survey of 324 San Franciscans revealed that 41% were aware of subliminal advertising, and 50% believed it to be unethical. Still, two-thirds of them were willing to watch a television program even if they knew that subliminal advertising was used in the commercials.

Surveys conducted more recently (Rogers & Smith, 1993; Synodinos, 1988; Zanot, Pincus, & Lamp, 1983) reveal that the public has substantially greater familiarity with subliminal advertising today. Between 74% and 82% of respondents (depending on the survey) claimed to have heard of subliminal advertising. Of those respondents who have heard of subliminal advertising, more than 99% believe that subliminal advertising is actually used and 44 to 48% of respondents believe that they may be susceptible to subliminal advertising.

The threat of subliminal advertising has not decreased. Instead, in the past 50 years the general public has become more aware and more suspicious of subliminal advertising. As described in greater depth later in this unit, public concern over the power of subliminal advertising is likely quite unfounded. Subliminal advertising, at best, is a very weak force. However, there is evidence that subliminally presented stimuli can influence affect, behaviour, and cognition. And subliminal stimulation is not the only way in which we can be influenced without awareness. Consumer-related affect, behaviour, and cognition can be and often are driven by forces that are entirely outside of conscious awareness.

3.2 IMPLICIT CONSUMER COGNITION

The application of prior knowledge to a task without conscious recall or awareness of the prior knowledge is a sign of implicit cognition (e.g., Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Khilstrom, 1990, 1999; Roediger, 1990; Schacter, 1987). A well-known illustration of implicit cognition can be

observed in memory research. Compared to non-amnesiac control subjects, amnesiacs perform significantly less well on recall and recognition tasks when given a list of words to memorize.

Introspective access to memory does not appear to be present in amnesiacs. On the other hand, when given the same list of terms and then required to fill in a string of word stems or fragments (e.g., c_k_ or pep__), the amnesiacs generate previously observed words almost at the same pace as the non-amnesiac. Essentially, the impact of past events on subsequent performance is almost the same for those with amnesia as for those without it; their implicit memory is equally as strong as that of control subjects without impairment (Warrington & Weiskrantz, 1970).

The unrecognized or misinterpreted influence of prior experiences on consumer-related judgment and behaviour is known as implicit consumer cognition. Different aspects of consumer cognition may be implicit. They are:

- consumers may not be aware of a biased stimulus (such as that seen in subliminal advertising);
- they may not be aware of the cognitive processes that mediate the relationship between a stimulus and an outcome; or
- they may not be aware of the outcome itself (Chartrand, 2005).

To what degree, however, are we uninformed of the influences and processes influencing consumer behaviour?

Decades of research have shown that explicit cognition has a consistent impact on consumer behaviour. Different models of human cognition have depicted people as –

- **naive scientists** (engaging in careful, semi-scientific attempts to understand the world around them),
- **cognitive misers** (having a limited cognitive capacity and generally unwilling to expend full cognitive effort), and
- **motivated tacticians** (having multiple processing strategies and employing them according to motivation and ability) (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

Despite their differences, all of these models agree on the importance of explicit cognition. People process information deliberately and deliberately, and this often leads to correct decisions.

People who are both motivated and capable of carefully processing persuasive information, for example, tend to accept high-quality arguments and reject low-quality arguments in studies of attitude change (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Of course, extensive cognitive elaboration is not required for persuasion. People can be persuaded by lightly processing peripheral cues (for example, an attractive model may elicit positive feelings toward a brand) or by invoking heuristics (for example, a highly credible source would only endorse a good product).

But, given our limited cognitive resources and the volume of stimuli we encounter on a daily basis, it is clearly impossible to devote even a small portion of our cognitive resources to all of the stimuli we encounter. We cannot always process information thoughtfully and methodically (Bargh, 1997; Kahneman & Triesman, 1984; Posner & Snyder, 1975; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977). When we devote less attention or fewer cognitive resources to decisions, our performance can improve (e.g., Ambady, Hallahan, & Conner, 1999; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992, 1993; Dijksterhuis, 2004). Indeed, our frequent inability to explain our own behaviour correctly (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) speaks directly to the notion that we lack conscious awareness of many basic cognitive processes.

We should be able to explain how and why we do things if we are consciously aware of how and why we do them. In fact, we are so bad at explaining our own behaviour that attempting to do so frequently muddies the behaviour we are attempting to explain (Wilson & Kraft, 1993; Wilson & Schooler, 1991; Schooler, 2002; Schooler, Ohlsson, & Brooks, 1993). A non-stuttering research participant was induced to stutter via negative reinforcement in a remarkably compelling (if somewhat inhumane) example of our inability to make accurate attributions about our behaviour (Goldiamond, 1965). He received an electric shock while reading aloud, and the shock was only stopped when the participant stuttered. His stuttering rate was so high at the end of the session that he received no shocks at all. He returned to the lab two days later and stuttered so much that he was only shocked twice. When questioned about his stuttering, he blamed it on his anxiety. When asked directly whether the electric shock had any effect on his stuttering, he claimed that the shock had nothing to do with it. Outside of conscious awareness, cognition can occur (in this case, an awareness of the stuttering-shock contingency), and this cognition can have significant implications for our behaviour, including consumer behaviour.

A recent explosion of research on implicit cognition continues to reveal how mental processes that occur outside of conscious awareness can have a significant impact on judgment and behaviour. This unit is divided into two sections that review research and theory on implicit cognition as it relates to consumer behaviour. The first section discusses implicit measures of attitudes (other than the Implicit Association Test) affect, memory, and personality. The second section focuses on implicit processes and effects, such as subliminal persuasion and priming, consumer decision-making, and verbal overshadowing.

3.2.1 Implicit Measures

Implicit measures assess respondents' stored information as well, but they do not require the respondent to intentionally retrieve the information. Instead, information about the respondent is derived from responses to tasks or questions that appear to have nothing to do with the respondents' psychological state (attitude, trait, and so on). The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Morgan & Murray, 1935) is a classic example of an implicit measure. The TAT is a projective test in which participants are shown a

series of ambiguous images and asked to write a brief story about each one.

Trained coders then rate the story using predefined criteria, assigning the respondent a score on the dimension of interest (e.g., Need for Affiliation - Winter et al., 1998; attitudes toward union labour - Proshansky, 1948). Projective implicit measures are less favoured techniques due to concerns about their validity and reliability (Lemon, 1973; see Lundy, 1985; Winter & Stewart, 1977). Contemporary implicit measures rely more on the speed with which respondents can perform certain tasks, such as word categorization, or make word-non-word judgments (e.g., Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Two such measures are:

- The Implicit Association Test (see Perkins, na) and
- the evaluative priming paradigm (Fazio et al., 1995; Wittenbrink, in press).

Although both the response time-based measures and projective type measures can be implicit, they appear to require fundamentally different types of information processing.

Explicit measures are those which require the respondent to intentionally retrieve some stored information about himself or herself. Explicit attitude measures, such as Likert, Thurstone, or semantic differential measures, require respondents to retrieve previously stored evaluative information about a specific attitude object. Explicit measures of personality require respondents to indicate how well different trait words or behaviours describe them.

According to conventional wisdom, explicit measures are best used when respondents are willing and able to report on their psychological states. They are thought to work fine when used to assess attitudes or personality traits that respondents are consciously aware of and are not tainted by social desirability concerns. On the other hand, they are thought to be of very limited utility when the object under consideration is socially undesirable (e.g., prejudice – Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980; attitudes toward cheating – Corey, 1937). However, when people are unwilling or unable to report their true attitudes, conventional wisdom would advocate the use of implicit, or indirect, measures.

Baby matches a sound, indicating that they understand that “ah” comes from wide open lips and mouth corners pulled back (Kuhl & Meltzoff, 1982). This stage marks the start of the development of babies' receptive language, or their ability to understand what is said to or about them. Babies grow in their ability to do what you and I find difficult when listening to an unfamiliar language at seven months and beyond segment spoken sounds into individual words. Furthermore, their proficiency with this task, as measured by their listening patterns, predicts their language abilities between the ages of 2 and 5 (Newman et al., 2006).

3.2.2 Implicit Processes: Doing Without Understanding

The focus of this section is on the applications of implicit cognition to consumer psychology. According to Chartrand's Model of Automatic Processes(2005,p. 203),factors that individuals, as consumers, can be unaware of –

- (a) environmental stimuli that may influence their behaviour,
- (b) automatic processes themselves that mediate behaviour, or
- (c) the outcome of that automatic process, which includes "behaviour, motivation, judgments, decisions, and emotions".

Let us begin with a review of research on environmental influences that people are unaware of (for example, subliminal influences). After discussing automatic processes,we will also look at a few notes on outcome awareness.The intent is not to list all studies involving implicit processes and/or effects, but rather to provide an overview of the theoretical and empirical work being done in the various research areas.

- **Awareness of Environmental Stimuli: Subliminal Presentation of Stimuli, and More Overt Priming Effects**

Despite a little scientific doubt about the existence of unconscious mental activity, there are serious questions about subliminal perception and the types of effects it can have. There are a variety of problems with research involving the presentation of subliminal stimuli, but it is perhaps best to start with definitional issues and different usages of the term.

Subliminal stimuli (visual, auditory, or tactile) are those which are presented in such a way that they elicit no sensation in the respondent. Pratkanis and Greenwald (1988) classified subliminal stimuli into four categories –

- **subthreshold stimuli** or stimuli presented at energy levels too low to be detectable;
- **masked stimuli** or stimuli presented very quickly and immediately followed by another meaningless stimulus intended to interfere with perception;
- **unattended stimuli**, in which attention is drawn away from the critical stimulus; and
- **figurally transformed stimuli**, which include items that are blurred, decomposed, or otherwise distorted Because they evoke the limen, the first two categories fit a psychological definition of subliminal.

The threshold, also known as the limen, is the point at which a stimulus elicits a sensation.The most appropriate way to identify subliminal perception is to simply ask participants if they noticed the presentation of a stimulus (Cheesman & Merikle, 1986; Fowler, 1986; Greenwald, 1992; Kihlstrom, 1987; Merikle, 1988).

Kihlstrom (1999) proposed a distinction between explicit and implicit perception, similar to the distinction between implicit and explicit memory. The conscious awareness of some element in the environment, as well as the ability to report on that element, is referred to as explicit perception. Implicit perception is the perception that occurs without awareness and may include subliminal perceptions of stimuli.

A critical aspect of implicit perception is the inability to consciously report the presence of the stimuli. Subliminal means that respondents claim to be unable to see the stimulus. As Kihlstrom (1999) points out, this conceptualization also avoids another issue with defining subliminal perception, namely the limen. Of course, with this approach, one must still worry about respondents being truthful, but incentives can be used to increase respondents' motivation to be truthful.

Pratkanis and Aronson (1992) conducted a remarkably thorough review of over 150 mass media articles and over 200 academic papers and found no clear evidence in support of subliminal persuasion. Pratkanis (1992) cited the shortcomings of subliminal "the failure to control for subject expectancy and experimenter bias effects, selective reporting of positive over negative findings, lack of appropriate control treatments, internally inconsistent results, unreliable dependent measures, presentation of stimuli in a manner that is not truly subliminal, and multiple experimental confounds specific to each study". Other reviews of subliminal advertising have been more charitable, but still pessimistic about the long-term value of subliminal advertising.

According to Theus (1994), there is little evidence for the effects of subliminal advertising on brand choice behaviour, but other applications may be more fruitful. She recommends more research on the use of visual imagery as stimuli, recipient characteristics (for example, using messages that are relevant to the audience's needs, hopes, and desires), and the repetition of subliminal stimuli.

Despite the lack of evidence in favour of subliminal persuasion, there is a substantial amount of evidence demonstrating that subliminal presentation of stimuli can have an effect on the affects, cognition, and behaviour. Following the subliminal presentation of a semantically related prime, word-nonword judgments can be accelerated (e.g., priming bread facilitates recognition of butter; Balota, 1983; Fowler, Wolford, Slade, & Tassinary, 1981; Marcel, 1983).

The subliminal priming of trait words can also influence social judgments. Participants in a "vigilance task" in which words were presented subliminally were given to Bargh and Pietromonaco (1982). The concept of hostility was associated with zero, 20%, or 80% of the words. Following the vigilance task, participants read an ambiguous paragraph about a fictional character. Donald, a fictional character, was rated on a variety of dimensions. The higher the percentage of hostile words they had been exposed to, the lower their opinion of Donald was (see also Chen &

Bargh, 1997; Erdley & D'Agostino, 1988). Finally, we know that subliminal stimuli can influence attitudes.

Other lines of research have demonstrated consistent effects of subliminal priming on self-judgment and behaviour. For example, subliminal presentation of threatening stimuli has been shown to increase self-reported anxiety (Robles, Smith, Carver, & Wellens, 1987). Several studies have subliminally activated stereotypes and demonstrated behavioural assimilation to those stereotypes. Elderly participants subliminally exposed to words reflecting positive aspects of the elderly stereotype (e.g., wise) have been shown to walk faster (Hausdorff, Levy, & Wei, 1999) and have improved memory (Levy, 1996); however, elderly participants exposed to negative aspects of the elderly stereotype (e.g., senile) have shown worsened memory (Levy, 1996).

In simple language, subliminal persuasion is unlikely, and the effects of subliminal advertising are far from those suggested by Vicary. Subliminally presented stimuli can influence semantic, evaluative, and social judgments, as well as attitudes, behaviour, and the processing of seemingly unrelated information. In summary, the evidence to date suggests that subliminal stimuli can be used to evoke abstract concepts and affects, and that they can influence related judgments and behaviours where the primed concepts are reasonably available (e.g., increasing hostility in an already frustrating situation, walking more slowly when asked to walk down a hall, drinking more of a beverage when thirsty).

However, subliminal stimuli cannot be used to directly persuade or dictate behaviour (for example, causing hostile outbursts without provocation, getting up and walking down the corridor, or going to the soda machine and purchasing a beverage). It is possible to increase accessibility through subliminal priming, and this can affect behaviour to the extent that the newly accessible primes are applicable to the current situation.

- **Awareness of Automatic Processes: Aware of the Stimulus, but Unaware of the Cognitive Processes**

Actual purchasing behaviour is one area where surprisingly little research has been conducted. While much of our purchasing is done on purpose, intentionally, and deliberately, there may be innumerable forces acting outside of our conscious awareness that influence what, when, and how we buy (Simonson, 2005). Morwitz, Fitzsimons, and others have done extensive research on the mere-measurement effect (Fitzsimons & Morwitz, 1996; Fitzsimons & Shiv, 2001; Fitzsimons & Williams, 2000; Morwitz & Fitzsimons, 2004; Morwitz, Johnson, & Schmittlein, 1993; Williams, Fitzsimons, & Block, 2004). These researchers have demonstrated in a series of studies that simply asking consumers about their purchase intentions can increase the likelihood of purchase.

Asking broad, category-level questions (for example, "How likely are you to buy an automobile?") increases the likelihood of purchase in that product category. When you ask category-level questions to regular users of a brand, you increase the likelihood of specific brand repurchase, and

when you ask category-level questions to non-users, you increase the likelihood of category leader purchase.

Because asking intentional questions increases the accessibility of attitudes toward specific members of the product category, the meremeasurement effect appears to emerge. Furthermore, the effect appears to fade when respondents recognize the intention questions as attempts at persuasion. Participants in these studies are clearly aware of the environmental stimulus (a direct question about purchase intentions), but they are not aware of the automatic processes elicited by the question (increased attitude accessibility).

- **Awareness of Outcomes: Acting without Knowing**

Although there is a great deal of psychological research on behaviour without awareness, the work on consumer behaviour without awareness is limited, to say the least. The scientific study of behaviour without awareness is a tricky business largely because conceptual and operational definitions of behaviour without awareness are many and varied (see Adams, 1957; Frensch & R nger, 2003).

People may be unaware of the behaviour, itself (e.g., people may not realize they are tapping their foot). People may be unaware of some behaviour's relation to a contingent event (e.g., greater likelihood of buying as a function of having been asked a question about a product category). They may be unaware of physiological responses to stimuli (e.g., pupillary response, GSR). They may be unaware of goal activation, learning, and so forth.

It is clear enough that people cannot be aware of differential behaviour as a function of subliminally presented stimuli and it is generally assumed that people are unaware of subtle changes in their behaviour as a result of priming manipulations. As noted above, when people become aware of these contingencies they tend to react against the primes.

3.3 THE NATURE AND ROLE OF AFFECT IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

What exactly does "affect" mean? The term "affect" is still used to refer to what is essentially the evaluative aspect of attitudes. This stems from the traditional three-part depiction of attitudes:

- cognitive, affective, and conative (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993);
- a failure to distinguish adequately between evaluative measures (e.g., favourable/unfavourable); and
- antecedent or subsequent processes, which may be feeling-based.

We reserve the term "affect" to describe an internal feeling state, in accordance with recent scholarly discussions. An object, person, or position's explicit or implicit "liking" is regarded as an evaluative judgment rather than an internal feeling state. Russell and Carroll (1999a) put it this way:

“By affect, we have in mind genuine subjective feelings and moods (as when someone says, ‘I’m feeling sad’), rather than thoughts about specific objects or events (as when someone calmly says, ‘The crusades were a sad unit in human history’)”.

Most consumer research studies on affects deal with moods (e.g., Barone, Miniard, & Romeo, 2000; Cohen & Andrade, 2004; Gorn, Goldberg, & Basu, 1993; Pham, 1998), although there has been growing interest in the study of specific emotions (e.g., Lerner, Small, & Loewenstein, 2004; Raghunathan & Pham, 1999; Raghunathan, Pham, & Corfman, 2006). Moods are frequently regarded as low-intensity and variable affective states that lack source identification. The individual, whether prompted by physiological or hormonal/chemical activity (such as changes in serotonin and dopamine levels) or by external stimuli (music, weather, exposure to happy versus sad information), experiences a vague sense of feeling good or bad without necessarily knowing why. We are aware of feeling good or bad, optimistic or pessimistic, up or down, relaxed or restless, alert or drowsy on some days or after certain experiences.

Mood states also track our bodily energy levels (e.g., blood glucose levels), our daily circadian rhythm, and our overall health or illness, guiding both relatively automatic self-regulation responses and more conscious decisions, as we will discuss later. Emotions, on the other hand, are much more differentiated and thus provide more information about attitudes and behaviours. Anger, for example, will frequently result in target and context-specific responses rather than more general displays of dissatisfaction (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). It should be noted, however, that specific emotions can produce mood-like effects (e.g., being angry or sad can affect a pattern of behaviour) without the person being aware that the emotional response (to an identified target) has been transferred to unrelated behaviours.

Recent studies show that the degree of transfer is determined by two factors:

- (1) the salience of the source of the emotional state—transfer is more likely when the actual source of the affects is not salient; and
- (2) the domain similarity between the actual source of the affects and the objectively unrelated behaviour (Raghunathan, Pham, & Corfman, 2006).

Moods have been shown to be easily manipulated by exposure to emotionally charged stimuli such as music, videos, and pictures, or by recalling emotionally involving experiences (e.g., Cohen & Andrade, 2004).

3.3.1 Physiological and Cognitive Antecedents of Emotion

The influential James-Lange theory (James, 1884) proposed that emotional stimuli elicited bodily responses, such as changes in heart rate, blood pressure, and skin conductance, and that these bodily responses

were translated fairly directly into conscious differences in emotional experience (e.g., fear versus anger). While there was some success in relating "energetic" physiological responses to higher arousal negative affect (when compared to lower arousal states like sadness and guilt), there was no consistent translation of bodily responses into differentiating positive affect. More broadly, such physiological measures do not appear to reflect important differences in emotional valence (Bradley, Cuthbert, & Lang, 1993; Schimmack & Crites, 2005).

A more fundamental challenge to the original theory was to call the central role of bodily response to subsequent emotional experience into question. Schachter and Singer (1962) made significant inroads by demonstrating (via epinephrine or placebo injections) that peripheral arousal only distinguished between emotional and cognitive responses. In their two-factor theory, cognitive processes were crucial in interpreting the arousal that was being felt. Other research conducted around the same time provides a significant challenge to the bodily arousal component of this theory.

Lazarus and Alfert (1964) invited participants to watch a film depicting a tribal ritual that appeared to involve genital mutilation. However, half of those watching were misled into believing that the experience was not painful and that adolescents looked forward to this initiation into manhood, despite the fact that significant cognitive control over arousal was observed. Recent memory research, for example, shows the importance of such emotional experience in memory consolidation, which is consistent with the evolutionary underpinnings of classical conditioning (Cahill & McGaugh, 1998). More broadly, emotional responses were shown to be far more susceptible to cognitive control and experience appraisals than previously thought.

3.3.2 Memory of Affective Experiences

There is substantial evidence that the arousal intensity of an affective experience increases people's immediate and long-term memory of this experience (Bradley, Greenwald, Petry, & Lang, 1992; Kroeber-Riel, 1979; Thorson & Friestad, 1989), particularly for the central elements of this experience (Christianson, Loftus, Hoffmann, & Loftus, 1991). This appears to be the case even when the source of arousal is unrelated to the material to be learned and occurs after the learning has occurred, suggesting that the phenomenon may be due, in part, to a better consolidation of memory traces under high emotional arousal (Nielson, Yee, & Erickson, 2005). Emotional intensity, however, is not a guarantee of memory accuracy.

Biases resulting from changes in cognitive appraisals of the events or revised standards of judgment (e.g., looking back, a person may have a different perspective on the emotion-eliciting event) as well as a desire to see things differently (e.g., when anticipating a recurring experience such as childbirth) may intrude on people's memory (Levine, 1997; Levine, Prohaska, Burgess, Rice, & Laulhere, 2001). Retrospective evaluations of

affective experiences appear to be more influenced by the intensity at both the peak and the end of the experience, with duration playing a less significant role (Ariely & Loewenstein, 2000; Fredrickson & Kahneman, 1993; Kahneman, Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeier, 1993; Kahneman, Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeier, 1993).

3.3.3 The Role of Affects in Consumer Judgment and Decision-Making

In consumer judgment and decision-making, it is useful to distinguish three types of affect:

- **Integral Affect:** Integral affect refers to genuine affective responses that are directly related to the object of judgment or decision. Momentary feelings experienced through direct exposure to the object itself (such as the pleasant feeling of tasting a fine wine) and those experienced in response to some representation of the object—a representation that may be externally provided (e.g., a TV commercial for a product) or internally generated (e.g., thinking about a product). Affective responses are important to the extent that they are elicited by object features, whether these features are real, perceived, or only imagined.
- **Incidental Affect:** Incidental affect refers to affective experiences that have no obvious connection to the object under consideration. The majority of the literature on mood effects on consumer behaviour (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Kahn & Isen, 1993; Lee & Sternthal, 1999) is concerned with incidental affect, which means that the source of the mood is usually unrelated to the judgment or decision being made. Incidental affect may result from a person's emotional dispositions (such as chronic anxiety or depression) and temperament (such as general optimism or pessimism), as well as any contextual stimuli associated with integral affect (such as background music, pleasant scent, and so on).
- **Task-Related Affect:** Task-related affect is in the middle of integral and incidental affect. It refers to affective responses elicited by the task or process of making judgments and decisions as opposed to direct, integral responses to target object features or purely incidental feelings. The emotional stress of having to choose between two very appealing offers, for example, would be considered task-induced because the process of having to choose between these two offers is stressful, not the offers themselves.

Indeed, even when the options are associated with pleasant integral affect, such as a choice between two vacation destinations, decisions can cause unpleasant task-related affect. In the preceding example, the emotional stress would not be incidental because, by definition, it would not have occurred if a judgment or decision had not been required. In relation to consumer judgment and decision-making, each type of affect will be discussed separately.

Consumer research as a field has greatly matured in its understanding of the important role of affect in consumer behaviour over the last 15 years. The field has shifted away from its initial emphasis on mood states as "just another" source of contextual influence on consumer behaviour and ad-induced feelings as "just another" predictor of brand attitudes. The field has progressed toward a more in-depth examination of the critical role that affect—in its various forms: integral, incidental, and task-related—plays in consumers' experiences, decisions, motives, and actions. Nonetheless, while our understanding of the role of affect in consumer behaviour is expanding rapidly, the subject is still in its infancy. As this review demonstrated, many important questions remained unanswered.

For example, one important area for future research would be to determine the extent to which emotional experiences have long-term effects on consumer judgment, decision-making, and behaviour—influences that persist even after the feeling state has passed. Some preliminary evidence suggests that certain cascading mechanisms play a role in such long-term effects (Andrade & Ariely, 2007). Feelings appear to be interpreted differently depending on the questions that people ask themselves when inspecting their feelings (Pham, 2004). These questions appear to serve as lenses through which feelings are read and comprehended. Another important area of research would be to better understand the types of questions that feelings are supposed to answer.

3.4 SUMMARY

In the past 15 years, consumer research as a field has greatly matured in its understanding of the important role of affect in consumer behaviour. The field has moved away from its original emphasis on mood states as “just another” source of contextual influence on consumer behaviour and ad-induced feelings as “just another” determinant of brand attitudes.

The field has moved toward a richer analysis of the very central role that affect—in its different forms – integral, incidental, and task-related—plays in consumers' experiences, decisions, motives, and actions. Yet, while our understanding of the role of affect in consumer behaviour may be growing rapidly, the subject is barely in its adolescence.

As illustrated by this review, so many important questions remained to be answered. For example, an important avenue for future research would be to analyze to what extent emotional experiences have lasting influences on consumer judgment, decision, and behaviour— influences that persevere after the feeling state has dissipated. Some preliminary evidence suggests certain cascading mechanisms contribute to such lasting influences (Andrade & Ariely, 2007).

It has also been noted that feelings seem to be interpreted differently depending on the questions that people are asking themselves when inspecting their feelings (Pham, 2004). These questions seem to function as lenses through which feelings are read and understood. Another

important research avenue would be to better understand the types of questions that feelings are meant to answer.

3.5 QUESTIONS

Write short notes on:

- a) Implicit measures
- b) Memory for affective experiences
- c) The role of affect in consumer judgement and decision-making
- d) Subliminal presentation of stimuli, and more overt priming effects

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR – II

Unit Structure :

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Consumer Attitudes and Behaviour
 - 4.2.1 Consumer Attitudes
 - 4.2.2 Consumer Behaviour
- 4.3 Motivation And Goals in Consumption
 - 4.3.1 Implications for Research on Human Motivation: Searching for Consistency or Variety?
 - 4.3.2 Motivation and Commitment or The “Gun to the Head” Test
 - 4.3.3 Goal Structure
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Questions
- 4.6 References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand consumer attitudes and behaviour.
- To understand motivation and goals in consumption.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers are ordinary human beings who engage in activities related to the purchase of products or services. Therefore, the psychology of the consumer deals with the same kinds of issues as psychology in general: memory and cognition, affect and emotion, judgment and decision-making, group dynamics, and numerous other topics covered in the psychological literature. In the present unit, we examine the social psychological theory and research on the attitude-behaviour relation as it applies to consumer behaviour, and motivation and goals in consumption.

4.2 CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

4.2.1 Consumer Attitudes

In the field of social psychology (Allport, 1968), the attitude construct occupies a central role in theories and research regarding consumer behaviour. This construct, and in particular the expectancy-value model of attitude, offers an alternative to reliance on revealed preferences. A great deal of research in the area of consumer behaviour has focused on the structure and determinants of brand attitudes or evaluations, and on persuasion and other techniques designed to change these attitudes (for a few recent examples, Brunel, Tietje, & Greenwald, 2004; Coulter & Punj, 2004; Sengupta & Fitzsimons, 2004). Much of this work is based on the assumption that consumers' attitudes toward competing brands are important determinants of their buying decisions.

The Expectancy Value Model

Although formal definitions vary, most theorists today agree that attitude is the tendency to respond to an object with some degree of favourableness or unfavourableness (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It is the evaluative reaction to the attitude object that is considered to be at the core of a person's attitude. Consistent with the cognitive tone of most current theorizing in social psychology, this evaluative reaction is generally thought to be based on the person's expectations or beliefs concerning the attitude object.

Similar to multiattribute utility models in work on judgment and decision-making, the most widely accepted theory of attitude formation describes the relation between beliefs about an object and attitude toward the object in terms of an expectancy-value (EV) model (Dabholkar, 1999; Feather, 1959, 1982). One of the first and most complete statements of the EV model can be found in Fishbein's (1963; Fishbein, 1967b) summation theory of attitude, although somewhat narrower versions were proposed earlier (Carlson, 1956; Peak, 1955; Rosenberg, 1956).

In Fishbein's theory, people's evaluations of or attitudes toward an object are determined by their beliefs about the object, where a belief is defined as the subjective probability that the object has a certain attribute (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The terms "object" and "attribute" are used in the generic sense and they refer to any discriminable aspect of an individual's world. For example, a person may believe that Apple iPod media players (the attitude object) are popular with young people (the attribute). Each belief thus associates the object with a certain attribute.

According to the expectancy-value model, a person's overall attitude toward an object, such as a product, is determined by the subjective values or evaluations of the attributes associated with the product and by the strength of these associations. Specifically, the evaluation of each attribute contributes to the attitude in direct proportion to the person's subjective

probability that the product possesses the attribute in question. The basic structure of the model is shown in Equation 2, where A is the attitude toward the product, b_i is the strength of the belief that the product has attribute i , e_i is the evaluation of attribute i , and n is the number of accessible attributes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

$$A \propto \sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i$$

People can, of course, form many different beliefs about a product or any other object, but it is assumed that only a relatively small number influences attitude at any given moment. It is these accessible beliefs that are considered to be the prevailing determinants of a person's attitude. Some correlational evidence is available to support the importance of belief accessibility.

The subjective probability associated with a given belief, that is, its strength, correlates with the frequency with which the belief is emitted spontaneously in a sample of respondents, that is, with its accessibility (Fishbein, 1963) as well as with order of belief emission (Kaplan & Fishbein, 1969); and highly accessible beliefs tend to correlate more strongly with an independent measure of attitude than do less accessible beliefs (Petkova, Ajzen, & Driver, 1995; Van der Pligt & Eiser, 1984).

Furthermore, the likelihood that a given belief will be emitted in a free-response format is found to correspond to its accessibility as measured by response latency (Ajzen, Nichols, & Driver, 1995). Despite its apparent similarity to the SEU model, the EV model of attitude differs substantially from multiattribute utility maximization models in several important ways. One fundamental difference, unlike formal decision theory, is the attitude model makes no assumptions about rationality. Instead, it relies on the much weaker requirement of internal consistency.

Attitudes are assumed to follow reasonably from beliefs about the attitude object, as described by the expectancy-value model. The more positive the beliefs, and the more strongly they are embraced, the more favourable the attitude should be. The source of the beliefs, and their accuracy, are immaterial in this model. Whether true or false, biased or unbiased, beliefs represent the subjectively held information upon which attitudes are based. People may hold beliefs about many objects and issues that are derived not from a logical process of reasoning but instead are biased by emotions or desires and may serve a variety of personal needs.

The documentation of biases and errors in human judgments mentioned earlier lends support to this view. It follows that attitudes which are assumed to be based on beliefs will be similarly subjective and potentially biased. This view of attitudes can be seen clearly in work on such topics as prejudice and stereotypes (Allport, 1954), cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), self-serving attributions (Kunda, 1987; Miller & Ross,

1975), and social judgment theory in persuasion (Hovland & Sherif, 1952; Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

● **Measuring Beliefs and Attitudes**

In contrast to the revealed preference approach, work with the EV model assumes that attitudes toward products or brands (i.e., their expected utilities), as well as the beliefs on which they are assumed to be based, can be directly assessed. Any standard attitude scaling procedure (e.g., Likert or Thurstone scaling, the semantic differential, A. L. Edwards, 1957; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Green, 1954) can be used to measure a consumer's general evaluation of a brand or product.

Largely due to its ease of construction, the semantic differential (Osgood et al., 1957) is often the preferred method (e.g., Batra & Ray, 1986; Lutz, 1977; Madden & Ajzen, 1991; Mitchell & Olson, 1981). For example, in a study on the effects of advertising on attitudes toward a fictitious brand of clothing (Coulter & Punj, 2004), brand attitudes were assessed by using four 7-point evaluative semantic differential scales: like-dislike, good-bad, positive-negative, and favourable-unfavourable. The scale formed by the unweighted sum of these four evaluative scales served as a measure of attitude toward the fictitious brand of clothing, with a reliability coefficient alpha of .92.

Numerous studies have shown that attitudes towards products or services and toward other aspects of consumer behaviour, such as attitudes toward ads or retailers, can easily and reliably be assessed in this manner. To understand the basis for these attitudes, however, we must—according to the expectancy-value model—examine the beliefs a consumer holds about the product or service of interest. Many investigators rely on their own familiarity with the product or on prior research to select a set of attributes for investigation, under the assumption that these attributes are important determinants of attitudes or purchase decisions (for a few recent examples, see Batra & Homer, 2004; Hui & Zhou, 2003; Stoel, Wickliff e, & Lee, 2004).

In addition, the investigators also assessed overall attitudes toward the two brands by using a three-item evaluative semantic differential scale. The country of manufacture was found to influence both brand beliefs and overall attitudes. The correlation between beliefs and attitudes was not reported, but structural equation analyses revealed a significant path from beliefs about the three product attributes to overall attitudes.

The use of the expectancy-value model requires a more systematic approach to the identification of accessible brand or product attributes. One popular approach, pioneered by marketing researchers but now popular in other social sciences as well (see Kahan, 2001; Kleiber, 2004), is the use of focus groups. Potential consumers of a product are brought together in small groups and, in a permissive atmosphere under the guidance of a moderator, discuss various aspects of the product or brand in question.

The protocols from these discussions can be used to identify product attributes that may guide consumer attitudes and buying decisions (Calder, 1977; Greenbaum, 1998).

Prediction Of Consumer Behaviour

Up to this point, we have focused on attitudes toward brands, products, services, or other aspects of consumer behaviour. In multiattribute and expectancy-value models, it is postulated that these attitudes derive from underlying beliefs about the product's attributes together with the subjective values of these attributes. However, the main focus of the present unit is the effect of consumer attitudes on actual behaviour.

As a general rule, it is assumed that attitudes toward available options—whether inferred from choices in the revealed preferences paradigm or measured directly—determine consumer decisions. When confronted with a choice between alternative brands or services, consumers presumably select the alternative toward which they hold the most favourable overall attitude.

Because this assumption is virtually an article of faith, it is rarely questioned or empirically validated. Thus, the focus instead is on such factors as advertising that can influence beliefs and attitudes and should have an effect on behaviour. The criterion in many studies is a (hypothetical) choice between products, often fictitious, or an indication of willingness to perform a given behaviour (for a few recent examples, Arvola, Lähteenmäki, & Tuorila, 1999; Litvin & MacLaurin, 2001; Madrigal, 2001).

Attitudes versus Behaviour

Although intuitively reasonable, the assumption that consumer attitudes are predictive of behaviour must be regarded with caution in light of extensive research on the attitude-behaviour relation conducted over the past 40 years (see Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

● The Principle of Compatibility

To anybody familiar with current theory and research regarding the attitude-behaviour relation, these negative findings come as no surprise. It is well known that attitudes can be expected to correlate with behaviour only to the extent that the predictor and criterion are measured at compatible levels of generality or specificity in terms of their target, action, context, and time elements (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977, 2005).

General attitudes cannot be expected to be good predictors of specific actions directed at the attitude object. In the case of environmental concern—a very general attitude that specifies only a broad set of behaviours (protection) with respect to a global target (the environment)—the behavioural criterion would have to be assessed at an equally general level by aggregating over the many different actions in this behavioural

category (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). In fact, the case for this argument in the domain of environmental behaviour was made some time ago by Weigel and Newman (1976).

In most consumer decision situations, however, we are interested not in understanding broad patterns of behaviour but rather purchase or use of a particular product or service, the choice of one particular retailer over another, and so forth. These are relatively specific behaviours involving particular target and action elements, and sometimes context and time elements as well. While the principle of compatibility argues against reliance on general attitudes to predict specific behaviours of this kind, many investigators continue to be interested in broad attitudinal dispositions and their possible effects on specific behaviours (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

The MODE Model

The most direct and sophisticated attempt to deal with the processes whereby general attitudes may influence the performance of specific behaviour was provided by Fazio (1986, 1990; Fazio, 1995; Fazio & Towles-Schwen, 1999) in his MODE model. The model assumes that general attitudes can influence or bias perception and judgment of information relevant to the attitude object, a bias that is congruent with the valence of the attitude. However, the attitude must first be “activated” for this bias to occur.

Consistent with the logic of other dual-mode processing theories (see Chaiken & Trope, 1999), the MODE model posits that attitudes can be activated in one of two ways: in a controlled or deliberative fashion and in an automatic or spontaneous fashion. The acronym MODE is used to suggest that “motivation and opportunity act as determinants of spontaneous versus deliberative attitude-to-behaviour processes” (Fazio, 1995, p. 257). When people are sufficiently motivated and have the cognitive capacity to do so, they can retrieve or construct their attitudes toward an object in an effortful manner. When motivation or cognitive capacity is low, attitudes can become available only if they are automatically activated.

According to the MODE model, such automatic or spontaneous activation is reserved for strong attitudes. The stronger the attitude, the more likely it is that it will be automatically activated and hence be chronically accessible from memory. Whether activated automatically or retrieved effortfully, the general attitude is available and can then bias the processing of information. Individuals who hold favourable attitudes are likely to notice, attend to, and process primarily the object’s positive attributes whereas individuals with unfavourable attitudes toward the object are likely to direct attention to its negative qualities.

Such automatic biasing of information processing and judgments is more likely to be the case for strong, highly accessible attitudes than for weak attitudes. As a result, readily accessible, automatically activated attitudes are more likely than relatively inaccessible attitudes to bias the definition

of the event and hence to guide the performance of specific behaviours with respect to the attitude object.

Studies that were designed to test the MODE model's predictions concerning the attitude to behaviour process (Berger & Mitchell, 1989; Fazio, Chen, McDonel, & Sherman, 1982; Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989; Fazio & Williams, 1986; Kokkinaki & Lunt, 1997) have focused on behaviour in a deliberative processing mode. The results of these studies are generally consistent with the model.

The MODE model's implications for attitude-behaviour consistency, however, do not depend on the assumption that only strong attitudes are automatically activated. All we need to assume is that readily accessible or strong attitudes are more likely than less accessible attitudes to bias perceptions and judgments. Related to this issue, it has been suggested that the magnitude of the attitude-behaviour relation may be moderated not by attitude accessibility but by other correlated factors such as certainty, amount of knowledge, or the attitude's temporal stability.

Reasoned Action

The SEU model of behavioural decision theory and the EV model of attitude theory both make the assumption that consumer decisions are based on the relative attractiveness of available alternatives. Although this approach to consumer behaviour can produce valuable insights, it tends to lack ecological validity. We saw earlier that research relying on revealed preferences to infer decision-making processes typically confronts participants with artificial decisions among hypothetical products or services defined in terms of a selective set of attribute dimensions.

Little information is gained about the specific considerations that actually guide the consumer's behaviour. Elicitation of accessible beliefs in investigations of attitudes toward brands, products, or services can provide ecologically valid information about perceived product attributes, and these beliefs may help to explain consumer decisions. However, here too the decision-making situation is contextually poor. It is assumed that consumers consider the attributes of alternative products and base their decisions only on the relative advantages and disadvantages of the products in terms of these attributes.

This approach fails to take into account other potentially important considerations associated with the consumer's behaviour, considerations that have to do with the social context in which the behaviour occurs as well as potential situational constraints. An alternative approach to the prediction of consumer behaviour has been gaining ground in recent years. Instead of focusing on general attitudes toward products or services, it is possible to focus instead on the specific consumer behaviours of interest. The principle of compatibility would suggest that the most relevant antecedents of particular consumer behaviour are identical to the behaviour in terms of action, context, target, and time elements.

● The Theory of Planned Behaviour

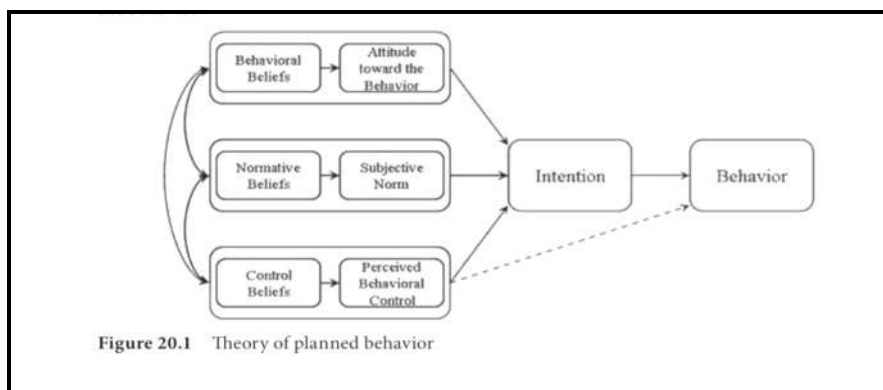
The intention to adopt a certain course of action logically precedes the actual performance of the behaviour. Consistent with this reasoning, social psychologists tend to view intentions as mediating between attitudes and actions (e.g., Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Bentler & Speckart, 1979; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Fisher & Fisher, 1992; Gollwitzer, 1993; Kuhl, 1985; Locke & Latham, 1990; Triandis, 1977). In research on consumer behaviour, investigators have conceptualized this causal sequence as the belief-attitude-intention hierarchy (e.g., Follows & Jobber, 2000; Madrigal, 2001; Ogle, Hyllegard, & Dunbar, 2004).

Undoubtedly, the most popular models in this domain are the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973, 1980; Fishbein, 1967a; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and its successor, the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1988, 1991). As a general rule, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger the person's intention to perform the behaviour in question.

Finally, given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behaviour, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises. Thus, intention is assumed to be an immediate antecedent of behaviour. However, because many behaviours pose difficulties of execution that may limit desired control, it is useful to consider perceived behavioural control in addition to intention.

To the extent that people are realistic in their judgments of a behaviour's difficulty, a measure of perceived behavioural control can serve as a proxy for actual control and contribute to the prediction of the behaviour in question (see Ajzen, 1991). A schematic representation of the theory is shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour



(Source -Haugtvedt C. P. & Herr P.M. Kardes F.R. (2008) Handbook of Consumer Psychology. Tylor & Francis Group)

When applied to consumer behaviour, the intention of interest may be the intention to purchase a given product or service. The following are the three major determinants of this behaviour that are traced to corresponding sets of behaviour-relevant beliefs:

- attitudes toward buying the product,
- subjective norms, and
- perceptions of behavioural control

Consistent with the expectancy-value model discussed earlier, attitude toward buying a product is assumed to be determined by accessible beliefs about the consequences of doing so, each belief weighted by the subjective value of the consequence in question. A similar logic applies to the relation between accessible normative beliefs and subjective norms, and the relation between accessible control beliefs and perceived behavioural control.

Normative beliefs refer to the perceived behavioural expectations of such important referent individuals or groups as the person's family, friends, and coworkers. These normative beliefs—in combination with the person's motivation to comply with the different referents—determine the prevailing subjective norm regarding the purchase.

Finally, control beliefs have to do with the perceived presence of factors that can facilitate or impede the performance of a behaviour. It is assumed that the perceived power of each control factor to facilitate a purchase contributes to perceived control over this behaviour in direct proportion to the person's subjective probability that the control factor is present.

In the case of a purchase decision, issues of control may be related to financial constraints or a product's availability. It can be seen that the theory of planned behaviour represents a "reasoned action" approach to consumer behaviour because it assumes that intentions and behaviour in this domain follow reasonably from the behavioural, normative, and control beliefs people hold about the behaviour.

4.2.2 Consumer Behaviour

There is general agreement that consumer behaviour refers first and foremost to the act of buying a certain product or service. This, however, is by no means the only behaviour of interest to consumer psychologists. At issue as well are the search for information relevant to a purchase decision, selection of retail outlet or service provider, and other actions performed before, and in the service of, a purchase.

For example, consider the act of buying a washing machine. Before purchasing, consumers may search for relevant information on the web, consult friends and coworkers, read consumer magazines, and discuss the options with a spouse or partner. The information obtained may narrow the decision to a small number of manufacturers and brands. At this point, the consumer may visit one or more local showrooms to view the different brands and consult sales representatives about prices, warranty, installation, delivery times, removal of the existing washing machine, etc. Finally, the consumer decides on a particular brand and places an order.

Consumer psychology is concerned with all aspects of the consumer's purchase decision, but in any given investigation we must, for practical reasons, limit our focus. We will usually select a behaviour of particular interest and examine the determinants of the behaviour in question. Although not always clearly recognized, every behaviour involves a choice, even if the alternative is taking no action and thus maintaining the status quo (Ajzen, 1996; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Nevertheless, it is useful to distinguish between behaviours that focus on a single option and behaviours that involve a choice among two or more distinct alternatives. As the washing machine example illustrates, most purchase decisions involve both types of behaviour: the decision to buy or not to buy a new washing machine focuses on a single option, whereas the decision to buy one brand of washing machine rather than another is a choice among multiple alternatives.

However, in the final analysis, even behaviours involving multiple alternatives are ultimately reduced to a single-option decision. After going through the preliminary stages, the consumer either buys or does not buy a particular brand of washing machine.

Single Option Behaviours

Any single instance of a behaviour is an observable event that takes place in a certain context and at a given point in time. In addition, purchase behaviours are also directed at some target, usually a product or brand. It is therefore useful to think of purchase behaviour as comprised of four elements: the action performed (buying, searching for information), the target at which the action is directed (the product category or brand), the context in which it is performed (Sears, online retailer), and the time at which it is performed (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Each of a purchase behaviour's four elements can be defined at varying levels of generality or specificity. If we decided to collect data about the extent to which people search for information (action) about a particular model of Sony flat-screen TV (target) online (context) on a particular weekend (time), all elements would be defined at a very high level of specificity.

In this case, the behaviour is so narrowly defined as to be of little practical or theoretical significance. A more meaningful criterion might focus on, say, searching online for information about any kind of product in the next two weeks. Here, the action element (searching for information) and the context element (online) remain quite specific, the time element has been expanded to two weeks, and the target elements have been greatly generalized to include all product categories.

Alternatively, we might be interested in searching for information about automobiles in the next 6 months. In this example, we are still interested in the same action (information search), but now the target is more narrowly defined as automobiles; the context is not limited to online search but could include visits to showrooms, consulting Consumer

Reports, or reading automotive magazines; and the time element has been expanded to 6 months.

The important point to be made is that observed behaviour may differ depending on the particular definition we adopt. Thus, consumers may act differently when they search for automobiles as opposed to life insurance policies; and different patterns of information search may occur 6 months compared to 1 week before a purchase decision.

Moreover, to study a broad category of behaviours, such as information search in general, we have to obtain data that generalizes the target, context, and time elements. This requires that we observe—or obtain self-reports—of information search with respect to different kinds of products, using different media, over an extended period of time (For discussions of the logic of behavioural aggregation, see Ajzen, 1988; Epstein, 1979).

• **Choice Behaviours**

We have seen that single-option behaviours can be studied at a high level of generality. Questions about behaviours that involve a choice among two or more options are usually studied at a lower level of generality. Thus, we may be interested to know why people buy one brand of automobile rather than another, why they choose one type of medical treatment over another, or why they fly one airline rather than another.

Here too, however, we must clearly define the action, target, context, and time elements of the behavioural alternatives. The decision to buy tickets on one airline rather than another can be affected by the destination (target element). A person may prefer one airline for overseas flights but another for domestic flights. Similarly, a choice of insurance company may vary depending on whether we buy life insurance, automobile insurance, or property insurance.

Determinants Of Consumer Behaviour

A purchase decision confronts the consumer with a host of potential challenges. Most important, perhaps, is the problem structuring that occurs before making a decision, which is as follows (Albert, Aschenbrenner, & Schmalhofer, 1989; Peter & Olson, 1993; Slovic, Lichtenstein, & Fischhoff, 1988) –

- becoming aware of the need for, or availability of,
- a new product or service;
- collecting information about the alternatives;
- identifying likely future events and other circumstances relevant to the purchase decision; and
- considering possible outcomes contingent on the decision.

After structuring the problem, the consumer needs to process the obtained information, choose a preferred course of action, and implement the decision at an appropriate opportunity.

Finally, consumers can use feedback resulting from a purchase to reevaluate their decision, perhaps reversing it by returning a purchased product to the store. This information can also prove valuable for future purchase decisions.

Multiattribute Decision Models

One approach to consumer behaviour is grounded in behavioural decision theory (for reviews of this literature, see Goldstein & Hogarth, 1997; Shafir & LeBoeuf, 2002; Slovic et al., 1988). With its roots in economics and statistics, the starting point of this approach is a rational model of choice behaviour. The decision maker is compared to an intuitive statistician who carefully considers the alternatives and makes full use of all available information in accordance with normative principles of probability and logic (Peterson & Beach, 1967).

When faced with a choice among competing brands or products, consumers are assumed to first identify the attribute dimensions relevant to the decision. Each option is then evaluated on these attributes to reach a decision. To make a decision, the consumer must derive an overall evaluation of each product category in terms of the combination of attributes that characterize it.

In the basic multiattribute model, this overall evaluation is assumed to be a weighted average of the subjective values or utilities associated with the individual attributes. That is, each attribute dimension is given a weight representing its subjective importance to the decision (with the restriction that weights add to one) and the product is given a value for each attribute. The subjective utility of each product is obtained by summing the weighted attribute values for that product, and the product with the highest subjective utility is chosen (W. Edwards & Fasolo, 2001).

- **Decisions Under Uncertainty**

In many situations, however, the attributes or outcomes of choice alternatives are not known with certainty ahead of time. Often, the outcomes produced by a decision depend on the “state of the world” at the time the decision is made. For example, an LCD television can produce a high-definition picture only if the service providers transmit high-definition programs. To take this uncertainty into account, the consumer has to judge not only the value of a high-definition display, but also the likelihood that this attribute will be available. Perhaps more readily recognized are the risks and uncertainties inherent in investment decisions. Perhaps the most popular approach to the analysis of decisions under conditions of uncertainty is the subjective expected utility (SEU) model (Edwards, 1954, 1955).

- **The subjective expected utility (SEU) of a Product**

P is defined in Equation 1, where SP_i is the subjective probability that Product P will produce attribute or outcome i, U_i is the subjective utility of the attribute or outcome i, and the sum is taken over the n attributes or outcomes of Product P. The decision situation is formulated such that the available alternatives are mutually exclusive and the subjective probabilities of outcomes associated with a given product sum to one. It is assumed that a subjective expected utility is produced for each alternative product and that decision-makers choose the product with the highest SEU.

$$SEU(P) = \sum_{i=1}^n SP_i U_i$$

- **Revealed Preferences**

Of course, individuals are not expected actually to perform the mental calculations described by multiattribute models every time they make a decision. These models are taken not as accurate descriptions of the way in which decisions are made, but rather as ideal or normative models against which actual judgments and decisions can be compared. It is assumed that consumer decisions, like decisions in any domain, can be modelled as if the consumer were performing the stipulated calculations.

Consistent with economists' mistrust of self-reports and reliance on revealed preferences, much work on behavioural decision theory involves attempts to infer the decision process from choices among specified alternatives. Indeed, importance weights, subjective probabilities, and utilities are rarely, if ever, assessed in research with these models (Coombs, Bezeminder, & Goode, 1967).

Applications of multiattribute decision models typically confront participants with a choice involving certain options and their possible outcomes. The decisions made are then evaluated as to whether they conform to the model's implications. A great deal of research in the past 25 years has shown that real-life decisions fall far short of the ideal assumed in the normative multi-attribute decision models.

Presumably, due to the cognitive limitations of the human decision-maker (Simon, 1955), subjective probability estimates are biased in numerous ways, deviating systematically from normative values (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Zwick, Pieters, & Baumgartner, 1995), and decisions often seem to follow rules that are incompatible with utility maximization (Coombs, 1975; Corfman, Lehmann, & Narayanan, 1991; Foxall, Oliveira-Castro, & Schrezenmaier, 2004; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky, 1969).

As is true of research on human judgment and decision-making in general, many studies on consumer behaviour employ simple decision situations involving known outcomes (e.g., Carmon & Simonson, 1998; Coupey,

Irwin, & Payne, 1998; Dhar & Nowlis, 1999; Hsee & Leclerc, 1998). Attributes describing the available options are typically selected by the investigator because of their suitability for hypothesis testing, not because they realistically describe actual decisions confronting consumers.

The revealed preferences approach thus can provide information about general principles of consumer decision-making, but it is not particularly useful for learning about the considerations that guide actual decisions with respect to the purchase of real-life consumer products. Another related limitation of the revealed preferences approach to consumer decision-making is that the decision situations typically involve a choice among two or a small number of alternative brands described in terms of the same attribute dimensions.

Real consumer decisions, however, often focus on a single alternative—for example, whether or not to buy a new television set—or involve a choice between alternatives with non-compatible attribute dimensions, such as a choice between buying a new television set or a new dishwasher. A different approach is needed to investigate consumer behaviour in these kinds of situations.

4.3 MOTIVATION AND GOALS IN CONSUMPTION

Motivation and emotion share the same Latin root, *movere*, which means “to move.” The interaction between motivation and affect is bidirectional: (1) affective states activate goals; and (2) goal pursuit (achievement, blockage, progress rate, etc.) triggers specific affective reactions (Carver, Lawrence, & Scheier, 1996). Although both directions of influence are of substantial theoretical interest.

In general, affective motivation relies on affects informational role, Schwarz and Clore’s (1983) seminal work represents the cornerstone of the informational tradition associated with experienced affective states. When asked to assess their life satisfaction, many respondents in this study misattributed their weather-induced feelings to the unrelated judgment at hand. Usually overlooked in the literature is the fact that the study also asked individuals to assess their “desire to change.” When asked this question on a rainy (versus sunny) day, individuals reported a stronger desire—hence, a stronger motivation—to change.

Murray’s theory of motivation (1951) suggests that motivations are driven by needs. Alain and Gary (1997) argued that the lack of clear-cut conceptual distinctions between motivations, goals, and values in the literature leads to a certain confusion in explanation and theorization. They suggested that individuals combine these three concepts into meaningful orientations toward success, and researchers should revisit the value concept partially accounted for motivation and goal.

4.3.1 Implications For Research On Human Motivation: Searching For Consistency Or Variety?

Our research identifies the conditions under which initial choices increase or decrease the motivation to pursue congruent actions and thus, it has implications for understanding people's motivation to appear consistent or variety-seeking. Assumption underlies classical research in social psychology, including self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), and attribution theory (e.g., Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Jones & Harris, 1967).

The common theme of these theoretical perspectives is the assumption that people wish to minimize the variance of their choices. On the other hand, a large proportion of choice research has been conducted under the assumption that people wish to maximize their choice variance and make divergent choices that pursue many different goals (Monin & Miller, 2001; Ratner, Kahn, & Kahneman, 1999; Simonson & Nowlis, 2000).

Our theory can potentially reconcile this discrepancy between consistency and variety theories by addressing this question from the standpoint of a person who can either highlight a single goal or balance between conflicting ones, depending on this person's accessible dynamic of self-regulation.

4.3.2 Motivation And Commitment; Or, The "Gun To The Head" Test

People must be motivated to enact a behavioural change. The motivation to self-regulate is probably crucial to its success, although it is probably the least studied of the four basic ingredients. People cannot hold their breaths indefinitely, and even if the willpower is sufficient to keep them from breathing for a long time, they will pass out and start breathing. They cannot remain awake indefinitely, and some people die because of falling asleep on sentry duty or while driving.

Motivation may come from perceptions of the difficulty (or possibility) that the goal can be attained. One model that focuses on outcomes derived from consumption (Bagozzi & Dholakia 1999) places self-efficacy at centre stage, such that people's beliefs about the skills they possess to achieve their goals are crucial to their willingness to self-regulate. This model emphasizes self-efficacy as a key to whether and how the consumer will approach the self-control task. Self-efficacy is particularly related to the means chosen to reach the goal. Motivation may also depend on beliefs about how self-control works.

Recent work suggests that laypersons have personal beliefs about how self-control operates (Mukhopadhyay & Johar, 2005). Moreover, personal theories about self-control can help predict variance in goal attainment, presumably because they influence commitment to self-regulatory goals and subsequent motivation.

- **Intrinsic Motivation**

In one series of studies, it was found that people in whom positive affect had been induced showed more intrinsic motivation than controls, but also responded well to extrinsic motivation when the work-task needed to be done (Isen & Reeve, 2005). Intrinsic motivation was measured in a free-choice situation by –

- (1) the choice of a more interesting task, over a dull task that had a very small chance of paying a small amount of money; and
- (2) increased amount of reported enjoyment of the enjoyable task (but not the dull task).

These are standard measures used in the intrinsic motivation literature (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985).

- **Expectancy Motivation**

In a moderate range of performance (but not at extremely high or extremely low-performance levels), people in positive affect saw more connection between how hard they tried and how well they would do, resulting in greater motivation that is based on their realistic expectations in the situation (Erez & Isen, 2002 for more detail and discussion). This is not just a matter of motivation in the sense of “trying harder,” but reflects how effective the person expects to be if he or she tries moderately hard.

The results indicate that people in the positive-affect condition have greater expectations that their effort will pay off (where it is likely to pay off, but not where it is not), and this is the source of trying. This is important for self-control, because it prompts people to put forth effort and stay at tasks, in the expectation that trying will lead to success and the desired outcome.

4.3.3 Goal Structure

Goals are internal representations of desirable states that people try to attain and undesirable states that they try to avoid. Goals are relevant if an attempt to attain a desirable state can fail, or if consumers need to sacrifice something in order to get what they want. Turning off the air conditioner is usually not a goal but an act, but it becomes a goal when it is steaming hot outside and the consumer desires to be environmentally friendly.

- **Features of Goals**

Individual goals have several features that give them meaning and are responsible for their influence on behaviour and also distinguish them from each other (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Emmons, 1989; Little, 1983; Winell, 1987).

- **Goal content.** Goal content refers to what it is that consumers pursue. Winell (1987), for instance, distinguishes goals related to different life domains such as career, family, social/community, leisure, and

material/environment. Emmons (1996) lists 12 general categories of goals, including achievement, affiliation/intimacy, power, independence, and self-presentation. Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) identify intrinsic (e.g., affiliation and personal growth) and extrinsic (e.g., power, materialism) goal orientations that are reflected in more specific goals. In the most general sense, goals may be approach-oriented (e.g., start an investment program) or avoidance-oriented (e.g., stop smoking).

- **Goal desirability.** Because goals are internal representations of desired states to be attained or undesirable states to be avoided, the desirability of a goal is an important motivational dimension. Although avoidance goals focus on undesirable states, successful pursuit of these goals can be highly desirable, and some goals are more desirable than others.
- **Goal importance.** Goal importance is a related but different dimension. That is, goals may be highly desirable, such as having the right salad dressing, but not very important in the larger scheme of things. The distinction between goal desirability and importance is analogous to the distinction between the valence and strength dimensions of attitudes (Petty & Krosnick, 1995).

Goal importance and the closely related notion of commitment are considered to be antecedents of the amount of effort expended on goal pursuit and the persistence of goal-directed behaviour, and they have been linked to consumer involvement (Celsi & Olson, 1988), defined as the personal relevance or importance of a situation or task to a consumer's goals.

One way to conceptualize importance is as the discrepancy between the current state of affairs and a desired state. The greater the discrepancy is perceived to be, the more important the goal is expected to be to the person. Commitment to the goal is particularly important when people do not freely choose their goals, but the goals are assigned to them (e.g., in work settings), and when goal pursuit is difficult and takes place over extended periods of time (e.g., losing weight or saving money for a new home).

- **Goal feasibility.** Skinner (1996) proposed a useful distinction between agents (the person exerting control), means (pathways through which control is exerted), and ends (outcomes over which control is exerted) of control, and classifies the various control constructs found in the literature by whether they refer to agent-means, agent-ends, or means-ends relations. Agent-means relations are beliefs held by agents that they can use certain means.

- **Goal Pursuit**

Goal pursuit unfolds over time and space. Goal-setting is a motivational process during which a consumer has to decide whether or not to pursue a given goal or choose between conflicting goals. Goal-striving is a

volitional process concerned with working toward the chosen goal (Heckhausen, 1991).

The distinction is old (Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, & Sears, 1944), but has been found useful by many authors over the years (see Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Gollwitzer, 1990; Heckhausen, 1991; Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2004). Goal-setting and goal-striving processes occur at different levels in the goal hierarchy, and goal-setting determines but is also determined by goal-striving.

However, it is also true that the psychological problems involved in goal-setting and goal-striving are quite distinct (making a decision to pursue a certain goal and choosing between alternative goals in the case of goal-setting versus planning, initiating action, monitoring progress, dealing with obstacles, and evaluating goal achievement in the case of goal-striving).

Furthermore, goal-setting is presumably most important when a consumer makes the initial decision to pursue a particular goal, which we call the basic or identification level of goal pursuit, and our discussion of goal-setting is mostly focused on this issue.

- **Goal-setting**

Setting a goal refers to the processes involved in representing a desired state internally with the intention to reach this state, including selecting a goal from among its alternatives (dieting vs. reducing debt), as well as committing oneself to a specific level to attain (lose 10 lbs. in the next 6 months or 4 lbs. in the next 4 weeks).

The outcome of the goal-setting process is a goal intention, a self-instruction to strive toward attaining the desired state, which provides overall direction to goal pursuit and commits the person to try to attain the desired state (Gollwitzer, 1990). As a first step, let us distinguish between external and internal goals (Austin & Vancouver, 1996).

Although all goals are ultimately internally represented, some goals are motivated by external factors and other goals by internal ones. The prototypes of external goals are assigned goals, which have been studied extensively by industrial psychologists (Locke & Latham, 1990). We focus on internal goals (i.e., goals that are pursued primarily for personal reasons), but acknowledge that external factors can have a significant influence on goal pursuit (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

We also emphasize deliberate goal-setting processes, although goals may become activated incidentally, for example, during exposure to means with strong linkages to higher-level desirable goals (such as when exposure to an ad for a low-fat product primes a weight loss goal). Such bottom-up goal priming effects have obvious relevance for consumer behaviour (Fishbach & Dhar, n.a.).

- **Expectancy-value theories of Goal-setting.**

The general principle of expectancy-value theories is that the more desirable the goal, the higher the likelihood that it will be chosen, but the consumer also has to believe that goal achievement is possible. There is a long tradition of expectancy-value models of motivation, starting with the work on levels of aspiration (see Lewin et al 1944, for a review), but the models that have had the greatest influence on the consumer behaviour literature are two attitudinal theories, the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985).

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was originally designed to explain and predict volitional behaviours (e.g., using birth control pills or donating blood), which may be thought of as very simple goals, in the sense that goal pursuit is not problematic. However, the theory has often been applied to goals rather than behaviours (e.g., losing weight). TRA can be regarded as a theory of goal-setting because the essence of the model is how people form intentions to engage in a behaviour or pursue a goal.

According to TRA, behavioural intentions are a function of a personal factor, attitude toward the behaviour, and a social factor, subjective norms. Attitudes are conceptualized as the summation of a person's evaluation of the consequences of engaging in the behaviour weighted by his or her beliefs that the behaviour will lead to these consequences.

The consequences have generally been rather cognitive in nature, although they could include affective experiences (e.g., guilty feelings or increased sexual pleasure as consequences of using birth control pills, as in Jaccard & Davidson, 1972), and they are usually rated on semantic differential scales such as good–bad. In the terminology used earlier, the belief strength ratings are similar to instrumentalities or outcome-consequence expectancies, and the evaluations measure the desirability of the consequences associated with the behaviour.

- **Goal conflict**

Expectancy-value models of motivation assume that in the case of multiple goals, the desirability and feasibility of each are determined and that the highest-scoring goal will be implemented in a “winner takes all” approach. Yet, consumers frequently experience goal conflicts (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994; Emmons, 1996), either due to ambivalence or goal incompatibility.

- First, ambivalence may be experienced in case of an approach-avoidance conflict, when a goal simultaneously combines desirable and undesirable outcomes, such as when a person strives to lose weight during a Sunday BBQ at the lakeside.
- Second, two highly desirable goals may compete for the same resources, leading to an approach-approach conflict.

For example, a consumer may want to take a year-long world cruise but also build a house. Similarly, two desirable goals may be intrinsically conflicting, leading to an approach-approach conflict due to a value restriction.

For example, consumers' religious values calling for a life of material simplicity may conflict with their material values (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002).

Comparatively little is known about the frequency, determinants and consequences of goal conflicts, and how consumers resolve them.

- **Goal-striving**

Once a decision has been made to pursue a goal (i.e., a goal intention has been formed), the consumer has to consider the implementation of the chosen goal: possible courses of action have to be planned, actual goal-directed behaviours have to be initiated and maintained, progress has to be monitored and possible adjustments have to be made, obstacles have to be dealt with, and, finally, goal achievement has to be evaluated.

- **Planning**

Planning means deliberating what has to be done in order to enact the chosen goal. Thus, planning involves thinking about how, where and when to act with the purpose of reaching the goal. Mental simulation about future outcomes and the courses of action to attain them yield plans that encourage goal achievement.

Goal-directed behaviour can be spontaneously triggered by the situational context (either because of previous experiences in which particular instrumental responses have been linked to certain environmental cues or because of previously formed implementation intentions) or deliberately initiated by the person. In the latter case, if the behaviour is entirely under volitional control, goal pursuit is unproblematic.

However, often one has to wait for an opportune moment to initiate action and maintain goal-directed behaviour until it is completed. It has been proposed that a so-called implemental mindset, in which the focus of thought is on doing rather than on thinking, may help with this phase of goal pursuit (Gollwitzer, 1996; Gollwitzer et al., 2004).

That is, after people have committed themselves to pursuing a given goal, they are presumably focused on information that is relevant to goal achievement and will tune out distracting information. Furthermore, information about the desirability and feasibility of the chosen goal will be processed in a biased fashion to favour continued commitment and persistent goal pursuit.

- **Monitoring of progress**

According to control theory (Carver, Lawrence, & Scheier, 1996; Powers, 1973), goal progress is monitored by feedback loops in which the

consumer's current situation is compared to a reference standard (i.e., a goal). The implications of this comparison depend on the type of feedback loop. In a negative feedback loop, the goal is something to be approached. Therefore, a perceived discrepancy between the current situation and the goal requires adjustments to the current state.

In contrast, in a positive feedback loop, where the goal is something to be avoided, the system is designed to enlarge the discrepancy between the current state and the avoidance goal. Carver and Scheier argue that positive feedback loops are generally unstable and are often constrained by negative feedback loops, such that a person trying to avoid an undesirable state eventually gravitates toward a more desirable state.

During reasonably complex goal pursuits many different goals at different levels of abstraction have to be monitored. Feedback loops can be specified at various levels of the goal hierarchy. The result of the comparison between the current state and a goal can be posited to serve as input to the establishment of a reference value (i.e., a goal) at a lower level of the hierarchy. In this way, an integrated monitoring system for the entire process of goal pursuit can be achieved.

- **Evaluation of goal achievement.**

People may hold outcome and process goals (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). With an outcome goal, goal pursuit is terminated when the goal has been reached (e.g., buying a car). With a process goal, goal pursuit is continuous since attaining the goal is not a discrete event and discrepancies are always possible (e.g., avoid making impulse purchases). In the latter case, successful goal pursuit does not lead to the termination of goal-striving but attempts to maintain progress.

We distinguish four general coping strategies when evaluations of goal attainment are unfavourable. They are as follows:

- First, consumers can continue striving, working harder or longer (Baumeister et al., 1994).
- Second, an initial plan can be revised when assumptions made during planning turn out to be untenable or unforeseen circumstances occur. In this case, a new planning cycle starts that takes into account the new contingencies.
- Third, a goal can be postponed or tabled (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Ford, 1992). Tabling means that the goal is temporarily put aside because of a preoccupation with a different goal favoured by current circumstances. When this occurs, the question arises whether and under what conditions the original goal will be reinstated.
- Fourth, a goal can be abandoned when the likelihood of successful goal achievement is deemed too small. So this is how goal and motivation influence the process of consumption.

4.4 SUMMARY

Two major paradigms have provided much of the impetus for the study of consumer behaviour. Choices among alternative brands, products, or services are in many ways no different from other kinds of decisions, and the methods of behavioural decision theory have thus proven valuable to the study of consumer behaviour.

However, as in other kinds of decisions, judgments underlying consumer choices are found to deviate in systematic ways from normative prescriptions. One limitation of the revealed preferences approach adopted in work on multiattribute decisions is that it provides no direct information about consumers' beliefs and attitudes regarding real-life products or services.

A more fruitful approach in this regard is found in the expectancy-value model of attitude. In work with this model, accessible beliefs about a product are elicited in a free-response format and attitudes toward the product are directly assessed. This approach makes it possible for the investigator to identify important attribute characteristics that guide consumer attitudes and behaviour.

In a related fashion, the theory of planned behaviour provides a conceptual framework that focuses on the specific behaviours performed by consumers, be they buying a given brand or product, searching for information about a product, or shopping at a given retail outlet.

According to the theory, the immediate antecedent of such behaviours is the intention to perform the behaviour in question. Intentions, in turn, are determined by attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Behavioural, normative, and control beliefs, respectively, provide the basis for the formation of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioural control. As in many other behavioural domains, the theory of planned behaviour has proven to be a useful conceptual and methodological framework for the study of consumer behaviour.

Goal structure and goal-setting also play an important role in the choice of consumer behaviour. In short, motivation and the goal influence the process of consumption.

4.5 QUESTIONS

Write a detailed note on the following:

1. Consumer Behaviour
2. MODE Model
3. Goal Structure
4. Attitudes

4.6 REFERENCES

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THE SELF AND SOCIAL IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR – I

Unit Structure :

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Dynamics of Relationship between Brands and Identity
 - 5.2.1. Consumer Brand Identification
 - 5.2.2 Brand Identity
 - 5.2.3 Conceptual Model
 - 5.2.4 Implications
- 5.3 How Products Prime Social Networks?
- 5.4 Family Consumption Decision-Making
 - 5.4.1 Approaches to Family Decision-Making
 - 5.4.2 Classification of Findings on Family Decision-Making
 - 5.4.3 Family Decision-Making Model
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Questions
- 5.7 Reference

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of brand identity.
- To know the approaches to family decision-making
- To understand the Family Decision-Making Model

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we are going to discuss how the brand identity influences the brand for consumers. We are going to study different models to understand the process. Then we will study how products prime social networks. Then we will see the process of family decision-making, that is – as a family, how decisions can be made effectively. So, we will study family consumption decision-making.

5.2 DYNAMICS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRANDS AND IDENTITY

5.2.1 Consumer-Brand Identification

The concept of identification was originally developed in the fields of social psychology and organizational behaviour and has its roots in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It covers the sense of connection between an individual and an organization and represents the extent to which individuals perceive oneness with the organizational identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Therefore, identification has consensually been defined as a consumer's psychological state of perceiving, feeling, and valuing his or her belongingness with an organization (Lam et al., 2013). It is considered to be an active, selective, and volitional act motivated by the satisfaction of one or more self-definitional needs which depends on the central, distinctive, and enduring characteristics of a specific target of identification (e.g., brand community, brand) (Bhattacharya et al., 1995).

5.2.2 Brand Identity

Kapferer first mentioned the concept of brand identity in 1986 and since then there have been many discussions of its definition (Janonis et al., 2007). According to Janonis et al. (2007), Brand identity includes everything that makes the brand meaningful and unique. De Chernatony and Harris (2001) suggest that brand identity includes values, aim and moral image that together constitute the essence of individuality that differentiates the brand. Brand identity offers the possibility to position a brand and encourages a strategic approach while managing it (De Chernatony & Harris, 2001). Kapferer (2008) suggests that brand identity involves many dimensions and any communication from the brand; whether it is formal or informal, verbal or non-verbal, should be in sync with its Brand identity.

Sääksjärvi and Samiee (2011) propose another definition of brand identity that describes it as a unique set of brand associations that firms aim to create or maintain. According to the researchers, brand identity represents how companies aspire to be perceived. They also suggest that the purpose of brand identity is to establish a relationship between the brand and the customer (Sääksjärvi & Samiee, 2011). Based on the reviewed definitions, brand identity is defined as “a set of distinct characteristics, applied in brand communication, making the brand meaningful and unique”.

De Chernatony (1999) has developed a model called “the process of managing a brand” which conceptualizes brand identity. According to the model, brand identity consists of four aspects –

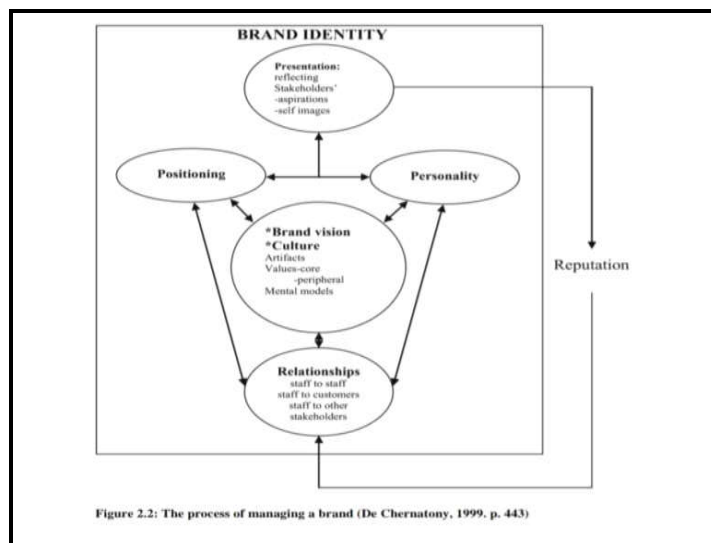
- Personality,
- Positioning,
- Vision &
- Culture and Relationship.

All aspects influence each other. However, the brand's vision and culture is the core aspect which determines and drives the brand's desired positioning, personality and subsequent relationships.

The brand identity is passed on to stakeholders who reflect and interpret the identity as a presentation (De Chernatony, 1999). As previously stated in the introduction, brand image is presented as the consumer's perception of the brand. This definition is well-suited even for this model. However, De Chernatony (1999) adds that aspirations and self-images are the main influences on stakeholders' brand image.

The created brand image thereafter causes stakeholders to form opinions of the brand which De Chernatony (1999) refers to as reputation. The reputation can either be positive or negative and has a direct influence on the brand. Overall, the model highlights the importance of the brand management task of managing the brand, especially when negative brand images and reputations of the brand occur. This process of influence is seen as circular and ongoing, which is also reflected in the model (De Chernatony, 1999).

Figure 5.1 The process of managing a brand (De Chernatony, 1999, p. 443)



{Source - Lindeberg A., Blomkvist, C. & Johansson, M. (2012).
Understanding the relationship between brand identity and brand image}

Personality

The brand personality establishes what specific characteristics the brand has, and these characteristics should indicate how the brand would be in human life. Humanizing a brand plays a more central part in consumers' lives (Kapferer, 2008), which is good considering individuals are keener towards brands that share the same or similar ideas (Ponnam, 2007).

Aaker (1997) also states that brand personality refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. It regards how the brand

personality enables a consumer to express his or her self through the consumption of a brand. Furthermore, brand personality increases consumer preference and usage, evokes emotions in consumers, and increases levels of trust and loyalty (Aaker, 1997).

Aaker (1997) has developed a theoretical framework of brand personality dimensions that measures the perception of a brand. These are measured by considering the extent to which the respondents believe it possesses the characteristics of personality dimensions. This framework enables experimental researchers to measure the symbolic meanings of brands as if they were people (Aaker, 1997).

Swaminathan et al. (2009) highlight that brand management needs to understand which brand personality traits are going to matter to customers in order to attach the potential of brand personality. However, not all customers are equally sensitive to a brand's personality. Interpersonal attachment styles determine what types of customers are most likely to be influenced by a brand's personality (Swaminathan et al., 2009).

Positioning

According to Kapferer (2008), companies can distinguish brands according to their positioning, that is when one emphasizes the distinctive characteristics that make it attractive to consumers and different from its competitors. Keller et al. (2002) agree that positioning sets the product apart from the competition. However, the researchers stress that companies also need to pay attention to other aspects of the positioning; understanding the frame of reference that your brand is working in and addressing the features that your brand has in common with the competition. This will ensure the companies have a better understanding of the market (Keller et al., 2002).

Kapferer (2008) further states that positioning controls the words that are communicated to the customer and can be explained as the brand's message and outward expression of the inner substance. However, the researcher rather refers to this as "physique", which mainly describes the brand's physical qualities and the brand's performance characteristics (Kapferer 2008).

Bronnenberg and Wathieu (1996) state that positioning is an important aspect that managers need to take into account when evaluating promotion asymmetry and communication. Moreover, Sujaan and Bettman (1989) believe that the aspects of the brand itself, such as physical attributes or situational factors, determine which positioning strategy is best suited for the brand.

The positioning also influences the customers' perception of the brand and their memory, which in turn can determine the category in which the brand is seen to operate (Sujaan & Bettman, 1989). However, Kotler and Gertner (2002) state that brands can add or subtract from the perceived value of a product. They also suggest that differentiation based on product characteristics does not motivate consumers or make them able to evaluate

the products in depth. Companies should therefore use the combination of a brand name and brand significance in order to achieve a better evaluation for consumers (Kotler & Gertner 2002).

Vision and Culture

As De Chernatony (1999) mentions, a brand needs a clear vision that describes a well-defined direction of what it wants to achieve. The brand culture describes the set of values that feed the brand's inspiration, as well as explains from where the product is derived (Kapferer, 2008). To improve communication with consumers and decrease misunderstandings, Kapferer (2008) stresses that brands need their own culture from which every product should originate. Banerjee (2008) adds that cultural values are principles that determine how people perceive themselves and others. It is also highlighted that marketers need to view the brand culture as a main weapon considering it can increase the competitive advantage in operating markets (Banerjee 2008).

Kapferer (2008) and Schmidt et al. (1995) stress that the culture links the brand to the firm and highlights the differencing factors, making it stand out from the competition. Kapferer (2008) further states that these differentiating factors of the culture can refer to the basic principles leading the brand's outward signs, such as product and communication. It is also mentioned that countries of origin are for example a highly valuable factor used by well-established companies; Volkswagen stands for Germany and IKEA stands for Sweden (Kapferer 2008). Moreover, forms and shapes, colours and materials in the visual and auditory communications express the brand's culture and values. This indicates that aesthetics either can add value to a brand or destroy a reputation if handled wrong (Schmidt et al., 1995).

De Chernatony (1999) further elaborates that one needs to audit brand culture in order to develop a strategy for reaching consumers. Schein (1984) believes that this can be measured through the brand's visible artefacts, employees' and managers' values and mental models of the people involved in brand-building activities. One can then understand which values that have remained unchanged over time, such as core values, and values that have changed. This audit illustrates the brand culture's suitability to help achieve the brand vision, through appreciating the gaps between desired and current components of culture (Schein, 1984).

Relationship

The relationship is defined by Blackston (1992) as the interaction between consumers' attitudes towards the brand and the brand's attitude towards the consumers. This means that consumers' perception plays an important part in brand communication (Blackston 1992). Kapferer (2008) stresses that companies should include the relationship facet into their brand in order to succeed in the process of transaction and exchange.

Meenaghan (1995) adds that companies need to involve brands in the world of the consumer in order to gain a “magnetic” relationship between them. Kapferer (2008) and Lannon and Cooper (1983) agree that brands need to be the voice that the consumers hear. The communication should answer –

- who you are
- where you are in life; and
- where you are going.

Brands and consumers are therefore connected since they are part of us and we are part of our brands (Lannon & Cooper, 1983). Swaminathan et al. (2007) and Fournier (1998) mention that consumers therefore form strong relationships with those brands that have values and personality associations that are similar to their self-concept. Brands need to act, deliver and relate in accordance to the consumers, and companies need to consider this when communicating with the consumers. Every part of the communication, such as images and symbols must relate to and exploit consumers’ values and lifestyles (Kapferer 2008).

Broadbent and Cooper (1987) mention that this can particularly be a way to increase the added value and differentiating factors of the brand. Moreover, De Chernatony (1999) explains that the relationship and increased interaction can boost the innovation and success of the brands, considering the company gains further understanding of the consumer. However, one downside of the brand image studies is that the focus of the relationship is on customer to brand, which makes the assumption that the brand is passive (Blackston, 1992).

Brand Image

Brand image is on the receiver’s side in the Sender-Receiver Model (Kapferer, 2008). It is the sum of impressions that affects how consumers perceive a brand and identify or differentiate the brand from others. Brand image can also be defined as consumer’s perceptions of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumers’ memory (Keller, 1993). Aaker (1991) adds that the connection to a brand in the mind of the consumers will be stronger with associations.

These associations can be further divided into subgroups, such as attitudes and benefits (Keller, 1993). Attitudes have a direct impact on brand image (Faircloth et al., 2001) and are widely defined in research, making the concept abstract to reach a total understanding (Keller, 1993). Nevertheless, brand attitudes are most frequently said to be consumers’ overall evaluation of a brand (Chen, 2001) and seen as a silent perspective of benefits and attributes (Keller, 1993). Benefits are the values consumers connect with the product or service and more specifically what types of needs the product or service fulfills for the customer.

For example, product or service benefits could be functional, experiential or symbolic benefits (Keller, 1993). Individuals perceive the brand image differently since they individually interpret the message based on their life experiences and specific characteristics as human beings (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). According to Grönroos (2008) and Kapferer (2008), it is impossible to affect an image since it is created in the mind of the consumer, which does not enable the opportunity to influence the perception of a brand.

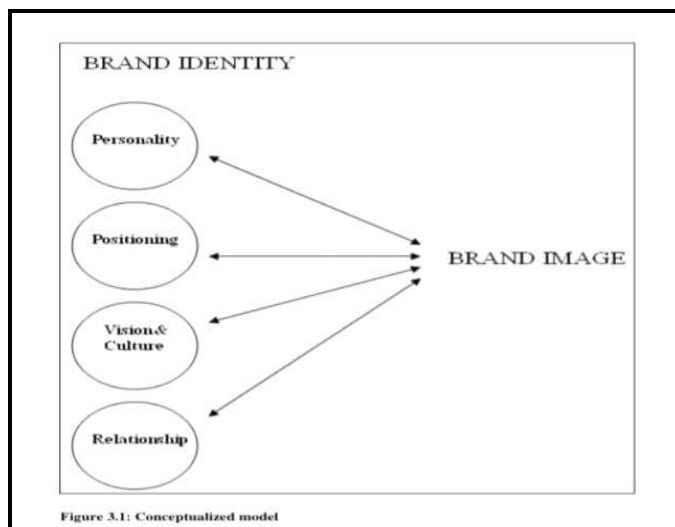
However, according to Faircloth et al. (2001), it may be possible to affect the brand image since brand associations could be manipulated in order to create a desirable image. In De Chernatony's model, companies can manipulate the stakeholders' aspirations and self-images that together represent the brand image. Establishing a positive Brand image requires the establishment of a strong, favourable and unique association with the brand.

When Brand images are strong, they can be used to enhance a person's self-image, appeal to stakeholders, (Keller, 1993) and influence customers' purchase decisions, which in turn has an impact on the corporation's financial revenue (Munoz, 2004). For example, interaction with a brand can also affect consumers' overall attitudes to the brand where individuals can feel a sense of belonging by consuming or buying a certain product.

For instance, even if a customer does not belong to the elite class, they can feel a sense of belonging just by wearing a suit from Armani (Graeff, 1996). Products and brands can therefore be perceived to have symbolic meaning, which is part of the environment symbolized by the individual (Kapferer, 2008).

5.2.3 Conceptual Model

Figure 5.2 Conceptual or Conceptualized Model



{Source - Lindeberg A., Blomkvist, C. & Johansson, M. (2012).
Understanding the relationship between brand identity and brand image}

The model shows the connection between theoretical constructs and will serve as a guideline for the empirical investigation and analysis. Brand identity is placed on the company's side and includes everything that makes a brand meaningful and unique. It represents how a company wants its brand to be perceived by others. Furthermore, brand identity is divided into four concepts - Personality, Positioning, Vision and Culture, and Relationship.

The goal of marketing communication is to make the sender and receiver fully understand the meaning of each other's communication. In this case, this is achieved by having the brand image and the brand identity match each other. The relationship between these concepts is represented by the arrows in the conceptual model, which show a two-way exchange of communication between brand image and brand identity where the goal is for both sides to share the same information and equal each other.

A comparison between the identity and brand image is necessary. The comparison will be conducted based on the concepts of personality, positioning, vision and culture and relationship. This will ensure that you get a deep understanding of the relationship between the brand identity and brand image, and will allow them to identify several areas where communication gaps can exist.

It is important for a company's brand identity to match its customers' brand image. Brand management must continually monitor the relationship between them. Otherwise, communication gaps can occur. The established findings could contribute to managerial implications and strategic recommendations for their brand communication. Gender and age groups have different brand images and perceive messages differently. Companies should consider this in their marketing efforts. If there are major differences, companies should try to reach sub-groups by conducting niche marketing.

For example, companies can use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, in order to reach the younger generations. The marketing efforts should however not contradict the companies' overall marketing strategies. The company's customers can lack a well-perceived image of the company's positioning. In this case, companies should perform a competitor analysis, as well as an internal positioning analysis. This will generate answers regarding the company's current positioning in the market, as well as the company's desired positioning.

Companies should also do continuous research on the customers' brand image in order to gain significant knowledge of where the brand stands in the customers' minds. This helps to decrease possible communication gaps, as well as the possible negative outcomes that are highlighted in the problematization. Furthermore, if the customers are unsatisfied with the business, companies should perform customer research in order to find out the underlying reason why the customers are unsatisfied. This can lead to new findings that will improve the overall business (such as the 7 P's of marketing). Companies should investigate their brand personality to get

valuable insight into their unique selling points/keywords. Overall, brands should have a clear brand identity that is communicated to customers.

Companies need to choose one track and not try to communicate opposite keywords, such as “modern” and “old-fashioned”, since this will confuse customers and lead to weak associations with the brand. Moreover, by having a clear outward expression, companies can add perceived value to the brand, which can affect customers’ evaluation process positively. It could also make the brand stronger and more unique, considering more positive associations would be connected to the brand.

companies can experience customer involvement problems where customers do not feel a part of the company’s decision-making. Companies should therefore highlight the customers’ inputs into the marketing more. For example, a customer’s suggestion for improvements can be included in the companies’ promotional material, such as magazines etc. This will assure the customers that their ideas and suggestions matter to the company. This can also strengthen the relationships between the company and customers. In cases, where companies experience major problems concerning lack of customer loyalty, satisfaction and relationships, companies should focus on informing and engaging their customers more. This can create new interest and attention towards the company and the brand.

5.2.4 Implications

Remenyi et al. (1998) suggest that a thesis should make a valuable contribution to theory by for example extending the ability to understand a certain phenomena. This thesis contributes to existing theory by strengthening the understanding of the relationship between the brand identity and Brand image. This was done by presenting a Conceptual Model which explains the relationship between the theoretical concepts.

The model highlights that brand identity consists of four concepts; personality, positioning, vision and culture, and relationship, which together influence and create the brand’s identity and outward expressions. These four concepts are in order significant and influential to the customers’ brand image. The model also presents a framework which can be used by companies to identify gaps in their communication. It can further help companies perform better and improve their marketing communication.

5.3 HOW PRODUCTS PRIME SOCIAL NETWORKS?

Imagine seeing an advertisement for the Honda Odyssey, the “Family Car of the Year” in 2011. What comes to mind? You may think about factors such as whether you need a new car, whether the price is reasonable, or whether the design is aesthetically appealing. We suggest, however, that when presented with such products, another type of information springs to mind the consumer’s social network associated with that product.

For example, with the Odyssey, we suggest that merely seeing the mini-van causes your family members to become more salient. Do the same people come to mind when viewing the iPhone 4 S, or a fax machine? We propose that when presented with these different products, members of different social networks become more salient: family members for mini-vans, friends for iPhones, and coworkers for fax machines.

In this research we show that because products are associated with specific social networks, they can be used as primes to make those networks salient, thereby affecting consumers' word-of-mouth intentions and product preferences. A large body of research suggests that consumers display products strategically: to signal desired identities (e.g., Belk, 1981; Escalas & Bettman, 2003), divergence from others (Brewer, 1991; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), and uniqueness (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977; Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001; Tian & McKenzie, 2001).

In addition, research suggests that these strategic displays are often successful. Observers do use products to infer the personalities and preferences of others (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli, & Morris, 2002; Holman, 1981; Thompson & Norton, 2011). For example, Burroughs, Drews, and Hallman (1991) showed that clothing and academic courses were used to make inferences about other students.

Because different products are used to signal specific identities to different social networks—children display their textbooks to their parents but their comic books to their friends—we suggest that products become associated with those social networks. When a teenager repeatedly sees iPhones being used by his peers—and not, say, by his grandparents—friends rather than family members become linked to iPhones in memory. As a result, not only do iPhones help strengthen friendship ties by reinforcing shared interests, but the product itself brings those friends to mind, importantly even when those friends are no longer in the immediate environment.

Research on priming supports that linking products with networks is likely to cause those products to subsequently bring members of those networks to mind. According to models of semantic memory, priming operates through the activation of interconnected nodes that are triggered while searching for links between existing and novel information; indeed, memory and perception fundamentally involve linking new information to stored categories (e.g., Bartlett, 1932; Bruner, 1958).

As a result, situational and environmental cues can activate associated information in memory, making them more accessible (Higgins, Rholes, & Jones, 1977; Jacoby & Dallas, 1981) and impacting subsequent perception and behaviour (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Collins & Quillian, 1969). For example, people walk more slowly after being primed with the concept of “elderly” (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Fitzsimons, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2008). Most relevant to the current investigation, primes have also been shown to impact product choices and evaluations; for example, people who use orange-coloured pens are more likely to choose products

related to the colour orange (Berger & Fitzsimons, 2008; Lee & Labroo, 2004; Whittlesea, 1993).

This previous research demonstrates that products can activate associated information in memory. A related investigation demonstrated that active goals lead to the activation of different relationship partners, specifically those who are goal-congruent (Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008). For example, when asked to think about the goal “to have a fun social life”, participants were more likely to list those friends with whom they thought they would have fun. Thus, it showed that the goal can bring members of one’s network to mind by investigating whether merely priming people with products associated with different networks—iPhones and mini-vans—might spontaneously bring members of networks to mind associated with those products—friends and family.

These factors have been tested through four studies. Across four studies, priming consumers with products associated with different networks made relationships with members of those networks come to mind both more frequently and more quickly. Product priming makes consumers feel subjectively closer to associated networks, which then impacts their word-of-mouth intentions towards members of those primed networks. Research offers a subtle new approach for marketers to shape consumers’ behaviour in and toward their online social networks.

Previous research demonstrates that incidental exposure to information impacts consumer attitudes (Janiszewski, 1988, 1990; Shapiro, 1999). For example, incidental exposure to ads can prime related constructs and alter consumer behaviour (Berger & Fitzsimons, 2008; Fitzsimons et al., 2008). Results suggest that companies can employ product categories as primes to activate not only product-related information, but also which other consumers come to the target consumer’s mind, and therefore with whom they are likely to share content.

Via these salient networks, exposure to products can also influence future consumer choices and behaviours. Beyond our current results, one can imagine marketers constructing novel links between consumer’s product preferences and their networks, thereby instantiating associations that might shape future word-of-mouth and consumption choices.

More broadly, research has implications for the understanding of social networks. The majority of research on social networks focuses on the influence of existing social structures on the attitudes and behaviours of social actors within those networks (e.g., Burt, 1987; Galaskiewicz & Wasserman, 1994; Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988). However, simply assessing network structure does not allow for full prediction of the behaviour of those actors.

Kilduff and Krackhardt (1994) argued that the effectiveness of the structural approach is enhanced by the addition of individual perceptions, because these subjective perceptions have consequences for attitudes and behaviours that are not fully explained by conventional structural methods. Therefore, how actors perceive their ties and relationships influences their

behaviour above and beyond the network structure. Results offer a novel approach to the study of social networks by demonstrating that products can be used to change people's perceptions of their social ties and the strength of these relationships, thereby changing their behaviour within their existing social structures.

5.4 FAMILY CONSUMPTION DECISION-MAKING

Family decision-making is a concept in marketing and consumer behaviour where an individual decides to buy a certain product or service after deciding it along with his or her family. Family decision-making is a collective decision by the family, even if the individual is going to buy the product or service entirely with his/her own money.

Every individual has his/her own taste in buying and consumption. This pattern is largely inherited by the family or the people surrounding the individual. The buying behaviour of the individual depends a lot on age, gender, location, income and willingness to spend. The family members which comprise parents, siblings, grandparents and relatives play a very important role in deciding what to buy and what not to buy. The person generally discusses with the family members before buying any product which largely influences his/her decision. For a company, it is very important to analyze if their product or service comes under the family decision. Home appliances, cars, and computers are some of the categories where an individual might not be using the product but the entire family may be interacting with it hence becomes very important.

5.4.1 Approaches to Family Decision-Making

Most of the approaches to family decision-making can be summarized in the following categories:

Macro versus Micro Approach

Economics, social anthropology, and marketing have tended to take a macro approach in which house-holds, rather than members of the household, are the primary units of observation and investigation (Alexander, 1947; W. Bell, 1958; David, 1962; Ferber, 1962; Foote, 1961; H. D. Meyer, 1957; Oeser and Emery, 1954; Shaffer, 1963; Wolgast, 1957; Young, 1952; Young and Willmott, 1957; Zimmerman, 1947; Zober, 1964).

On the other hand, rural sociology, consumer psychology, and clinical psychology have generally adopted a micro approach, in which the major thrust was observing and investigating the interaction processes among members of the family (Alderson, 1957a; Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Bott, 1957; Bortel and Gross, 1954; Foote and Cottrell, 1955; Gilbert, 1957; Kenkel, 1966; Kirkpatrick, 1963; Nicosia, 1966; Olsen, 1956- 1957; Parsons and Bales, 1955). These two approaches have polarized thinking and findings that are otherwise interrelated.

Descriptive versus Determinative Approach

Some researchers have been interested primarily in observing and empirically describing the phenomenon of family Decision-Making (Alderson, 1957a; Berry and Pollay, 1968; Bortel and Gross, 1954; Ferreira and Winter, 1965; Glick, 1947; Kirkpatrick, 1963; O'Rourke, 1963; Shaffer, 1963; Wolgast, 1958). No attempt is made to examine the determinants of observed phenomena. Others have hypothesized a variety of determinants, including personality, family orientations, and childhood upbringing and background, to explain the interactive processes and the development of roles among family members (Blood, 1958; Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Bott, 1957; Foote, 1961; Foote and Cottrell, 1955; Heer, 1958; Hoffman, 1960; Ingersoll, 1948; Kenkel, 1961; Kenkel and Hoffman, 1956; K. King, 1967; Komarov-sky, 1946, 1961; Life, 1965; Lu, 1952; Motz, 1950; Oeser and Emery, 1954; Parsons and Bales, 1955; Strodtbeck, 1954; Weller, 1968; Wilkening and Bharadwaj, 1967; Zimmerman, 1947).

Attitudinal versus Behavioural Orientation

Most of the research seems to be attitudinal; that is, the verbal responses of the family members have been the basic source of information. The attitudinal approach has generally produced more information that has been useful in examining the causal factors of family decision-making. The behavioural orientation has tended to concentrate on the terminal aspects of family decision-making that culminate in actual behaviours.

Several basic characteristics of terminal behaviour are observed and analyzed. For example, the Market Research Corporation of America panel reports weekly on such characteristics as price, brand, store, and quantities of purchases of numerous grocery and personal care products for the family. Attitudinal approaches have also remained largely cross-sectional, and behavioural approaches have tended to be continuous observations. There are some recent exceptions, however-notably the general electric panel and the Berkeley-Illinois panel on household decision-making, where both types of information are gathered continuously over time.

5.4.2 Classification of Findings on Family Decision-Making

Research findings on family decision-making exist by the hundred in disciplines, such as sociology and social psychology. Most of the findings are in terms of the following categories:

Types of Family Decisions

Most of the research in this area deals with the distinction between buying decisions and consumption (Alderson, 1957a; Converse and Crawford, 1950; Coulson, 1966; Ferber, 1954; Foote, 1961; Fry, 1967; Gilbert, 1957; Herbst, 1954; Hill, 1958; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Life, 1964; Morgan, 1961; Nicosia, 1966; Shaffer, 1963; Wells, 1966). It is pointed out that one member, particularly the housewife, may be the buyer, but the products

and services may be consumed either by all the members or only by some other member. Specific attention has been paid to the role of the housewife as a purchasing agent and to the question of whether some decisions are truly joint among all members of the family.

In general, the consumption of goods and services is classified into three types:

- (1) consumption by individual members themselves,
- (2) consumption by the whole family jointly, and
- (3) consumption by the household unit. The third category includes the accumulation and maintenance of assets, such as a house, a boat, or household furnishings (Shaffer, 1963).

Process of Family Decision-Making

Three distinct aspects of the process of decision-making have received considerable research attention. The first relates to the role structure in decision-making among members of the family. Perhaps the single most consistent finding is that the husband plays the instrumental (ideal man) role and the wife plays the expressive (emotional) role in family decision-making (Blood and Wolfe 1960. Rurchinal and Rander 1965- making (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Burchinal and Bauder, 1965; Ferreira and Winter, 1965; Hill, 1954; Kenkel, 1961; Komarovsky, 1946; Life, 1965; Lu, 1952; Parsons and Bales, 1955; Strodtbeck, 1954).

Wolgast (1957, 1958) found that in the joint decision-making of buying automobiles, the husband usually initiated the thought of buying a new car and the make of the vehicle to be purchased, while the wife concentrated on the interior features of the car. Specialization brought about by differential decision-making roles among family members is considered to be significant in minimizing conflict in this function.

The second aspect involves the pattern of interaction and the exchange of information among family members (Alderson, 1957a; Berry and Pollay, 1968; Bott, 1957; G. H. Brown, 1961; Converse and Crawford, 1950; Coulson, 1966; Foote, 1961; Fry, 1967; Gilbert, 1957; Gisler, 1948; Glock and Nicosia, 1964; Granbois, 1964; Herbst, 1952; Hill, 1958; Kenkel, 1961; Life, 1964; Morgan, 1961; Murphy, 1960; Nicosia, 1966; Olsen, 1956-1957; Pollay, 1968; Sharp and Mott, 1956; Strodtbeck, 1954; Wells, 1966; Wilkening, 1958; Wolgast, 1958). Probably the most salient aspect was brought out by Carter (1954), who suggested that three patterns called individual predominance, group goal facilitation, and sociability are manifested by small groups, including the family.

The last aspect encompasses the individual differences in motives, preferences, and even values among family members and their effects on the process of family decision-making (Bott, 1957; Clawson, 1961; Coulson, 1966; Fry, 1967; Gilbert, 1957; Morgan, 1961).

Determinants of Family Decision-Making

The bulk of the research in the field explores the determinants of family decision-making. This exploration has covered a wide territory, ranging from basic personality traits of the spouses to specific lifestyles of the members (Alexander, 1947; W. Bell, 1958; Bott, 1957; Foote and Cottrell, 1955; Heer, 1958, 1963; Ingersoll, 1948; Komarovsky, 1946, 1961; Lu, 1952; Oeser and Emery, 1954; Parsons and Bales, 1955; Zimmerman, 1947).

For example, Kenkel (1957) examined the reinforcing or counteracting effects of dominance, persistence, and self-confidence. The latter characteristic has been treated further by other researchers in terms of specific self-confidence and general self-confidence (see Howard, na).

Several studies have directly or indirectly examined the status of the wife in a family. Both Converse and Crawford (1950) and Zober (1964) find greater autonomy of the wife among the upper and lower social classes and less in the middle class. This agrees with Komarovsky's (1961) exhaustive work in this area. Perhaps the determinant that has attracted the biggest attention is the family's lifestyle. For example, W. Bell (1958) presents a typology of families based on whether familism, career, or consumership are the dominant themes of living. White (1966) names five types of family values: flexible versus rigid, non-evaluative versus evaluative, objective versus family role, emancipated versus limited, and appreciated versus unappreciated. Based on combinations of these values, one family's lifestyle may be quite distinct and different from that of another family.

5.4.3 Family Decision-Making Model

In a Family Decision-Making Model, it is important to understand how the family members interact with each other in the context of their consumer decision-making. There are different consumption roles played by various members of the family. These roles are as follows:

- (i) **Influencers:** The members who influence the purchase of the product by providing information to the family members, the son in a family may inform the members of a new fast food joint. He can influence the family members to visit the joint for food and entertainment.
- (ii) **Gate-keepers:** These members control the flow of information for a product or brand that they favour and influence the family to buy the product of their choice. They provide the information favourable to themselves and, withhold information about other products which they do not favour.
- (iii) **Deciders:** These are the people who have the power or money and authority to buy. They play a major role in deciding which product to buy.

- (iv) **Buyers:** Buyers are the people who actually buy. A mother buying ration for the house etc. Father buying crayons for his children.
- (v) **Preparers:** Those who prepare the product in the form it is actually consumed. Mother prepares food by adding ingredients to the raw vegetables. Frying an egg for consumption, sewing clothes for the family, etc.
- (vi) **Users:** The person who actually uses or consumes the product. The product can be consumed individually or jointly by all members of the family. use of a refrigerator, TV, etc.

The roles that the family members play are different from product to product. Some products do not involve the influence of family members. For example, when vegetables are bought by a homemaker, he or she can play many roles of a decider, preparer as well as a user. In limited problem-solving or extensive problem-solving, there is usually a joint decision by family members.

5.5 SUMMARY

The unit began by providing essential background information needed for understanding the study. The theory of marketing communication gave an overall picture of why it is important for companies to communicate their market offering. After providing the reader with the necessary background information, the more specific problem areas of the study were discussed.

They are brand identity and brand image, which were explained in De Chernatony's model for managing a brand. This model was also used in order to get deeper insight into the brand identity's four primary concepts; personality, positioning, vision and culture and relationship. Moreover, the authors perceived the reviewed theories as relevant to the thesis' purpose and they could also be used as a basis for a conceptual model developed in the next unit.

This unit presented an analysis where the empirical data was connected to the theoretical framework. Then we discussed how products prime social networks. We studied family consumption decision-making when a product is purchased for the whole family, and how the decision exactly has been taken. This gives a basic idea of the process of family decision-making.

5.6 QUESTIONS

Write down short notes on:

1. Brand identity
2. Attitudinal Versus Behavioural Orientation.
3. Approaches to Family Decision-Making
4. Family Decision-Making Model

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THE SELF AND SOCIAL IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR – II

Unit Structure :

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction: Consumer Socialization
- 6.2 Stages Of Consumer Socialization
 - 6.2.1 Perceptual Stage
 - 6.2.2 Analytical Stage
 - 6.2.3 Reflective Stage
- 6.3 Challenges for Future Research
- 6.4 Summary
- 6.5 Questions
- 6.6 Reference

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand consumer socialization
- To know the stages of consumer socialization
- To understand challenges for future research

6.1 INTRODUCTION: CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

Consumer socialization is the process whereby one acquires the skills to consume, as well as the values associated with being a consumer. This can involve identification with the role of consumers in consumption society or a critical awareness of the problematic nature of being a consumer and of consumption society more generally. The socialization process is not necessarily limited to learning how to buy, but can also include how not to buy, how to limit consumption, or how to shop for a variety of purposes, such as economic value, status and distinction, or ecological sustainability.

Scholarly research examining children's consumer behaviour dates back to the 1950s with a few publications on topics such as brand loyalty (Guest, 1955) and conspicuous consumption (Reisman & Roseborough, 1955). Further development took place in the 1960s, as the scope of inquiry expanded to include children's understanding of marketing and retail functions (McNeal, 1964), influence on parents in purchasing decisions

(Berey & Pollay, 1968; Wells & LoSciuto, 1966), and relative influence of parents and peers on consumption patterns (Cateora, 1963).

Interest in the topic exploded in the mid-1970s amidst vocal criticisms of advertising to young children, mounted by consumer activist groups such as Action for Children's Television (ACT) and government bodies such as the Federal Trade Commission. Emerging from this growing interest was a new field of academic study—consumer socialization—focusing on the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and values by children and adolescents as they prepared to take their role as consumers in the marketplace. Thirty years later, an impressive body of research on children's consumer socialization has emerged.

Researchers have explored a wide range of topics, including learning about products, brands, advertising, shopping, pricing, decision-making strategies, parental influence approaches, and consumption motives and values. Advertising effects have also been a popular topic, ranging from a large number of studies examining features of children's advertising that are more persuasive to a smaller number of studies examining the cumulative effectiveness of advertising on children's values and consumption patterns. The undesirable consequences of marketing and advertising such as underage drinking, cigarette smoking, and unhealthy diets have also received attention throughout the years. The purpose of this unit is to merge findings from the last thirty years of research into a unified story of how consumer socialization occurs from childhood to adolescence.

We include research published in consumer behaviour and marketing journals from 1975 to 2005. Findings reported earlier than 1975, or reported in journals outside consumer research, are included only to provide context or corroboration for more recent work by consumer researchers. Excluded from our discussion is research pertaining to children's consumption of products, such as cigarettes, alcohol, and illegal drugs, which constitutes a vast body of literature reviewed elsewhere (for reviews, see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1994, 1995). Also excluded is consumer research pertaining to children but outside the realm of consumer socialization, such as –

- (1) studies of the effects of advertising strategies, such as host selling or repetition, on children's responses to advertising;
- (2) content analyses of television commercials aimed at children;
- (3) surveys about parental views of advertising and marketing to children; and
- (4) discussions of specific public policy issues and regulatory debates (for reviews of these areas, see Adler et al., 1980; Young, 1990).

6.2 STAGES OF CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

Consumer socialization occurs in the context of dramatic cognitive and social developments, which take place from birth to adolescence. A common approach is to characterize these developments as a series of successive stages, with each stage describing children's thoughts, reasoning, and perspectives at particular ages. Below, we describe several frameworks most relevant for our subsequent discussion of consumer socialization.

Stages of Cognitive and Social Development

- **Cognitive Development**

The most well-known framework for characterizing developments in cognitive abilities is Piaget's theory, which proposes four main stages of cognitive development: sensorimotor (birth to 2 years), preoperational (2 to 7 years), concrete operational (7 to 11 years), and formal operational (11 through adulthood) (Ginsburg & Oppen, 1988). Vast differences exist in the cognitive abilities of children at these stages, including the preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stages of most interest to consumer researchers.

- Preoperational children tend to be perceptually bound to the readily observable aspects of their environment, unlike concrete operational children, who do not accept perception as reality but can think about stimuli in their environment in a more thoughtful way. Preoperational children are also characterized by "centration," the tendency to focus on a single dimension.
- In contrast, the concrete operational child can consider several dimensions of a stimulus at a time and relate the dimensions in a thoughtful and relatively abstract way.
- Finally, in the formal operational stage, children progress to more adult-like thought patterns, capable of even more complex thoughts about concrete and hypothetical objects and situations.

Information processing theories of child development provide additional explanatory power for the types of cognitive abilities evidenced by children as they mature. Several formulations of information processing theory exist, but all share a focus on children's developing skills in the areas of acquisition, encoding, organization, and retrieval of information.

In the consumer behaviour literature, children have been characterized as belonging to one of three segments—strategic processors, cued processors, and limited processors—based on the information processing skills they possess (Roedder, 1981).

- Strategic processors (age 12 and older) use a variety of strategies for storing and retrieving information, such as verbal labelling, rehearsal, and the use of retrieval cues to guide memory search.

- Cued processors, ranging in age from 7 to 11 years, are able to use a similar set of strategies to enhance information storage and retrieval, but typically need to be aided by explicit prompts or cues.
- Finally, most children under the age of 7 years are limited processors, with processing skills that are not yet fully developed nor successfully utilized in learning situations, even when prompted to do so.

- **Social Development**

The area of social development includes a wide variety of topics, such as moral development, altruism and prosocial development, impression formation, and social perspective-taking. In terms of explaining aspects of consumer socialization, we consider social perspective-taking and impression formation to be the most directly relevant for our consideration. Social perspective-taking, involving the ability to see perspectives beyond one's own, is strongly related to purchase influence and negotiation skills. Impression formation, involving the ability to make social comparisons, is strongly related to understanding the social aspects of products and consumption

Developments in social perspective-taking are described well by Selman (1980):

- In the preschool and kindergarten years, the **egocentric stage** (ages 3–6), children are unaware of any perspective other than their own.
- As they enter the next phase, the **social informational role-taking stage** (ages 6–8), children become aware that others may have different opinions or motives, but believe this is due to having different information rather than a different perspective on the situation. Thus, children in this stage do not exhibit the ability to actually think from another person's perspective.
- This ability surfaces in the **self-reflective role-taking stage** (ages 8–10) as children understand that others may have different opinions, even if they have the same information.
- Children can consider another person's viewpoint, but not simultaneously with their own, an ability that does not emerge until the fourth **stage of mutual role-taking** (ages 10–12).
- The final stage, **social and conventional system role-taking** (ages 12–15 and older), features an additional development, the ability to understand another person's perspective as it relates to the social group to which he (other person) belongs or the social system in which he (other person) operates.

Impression formation abilities also undergo dramatic development, as described by Barenboim (1981). Before the age of six, children describe other people in concrete or absolute terms, often mentioning physical appearances ("Nick is tall") or overt behaviours ("Elizabeth likes to

skate”). However, these descriptions do not incorporate comparisons with other people.

- In Barenboim’s first stage, the **behavioural comparisons phase** (ages 6–8), children do incorporate comparisons as a basis of their impressions, but the comparisons continue to be based on concrete attributes or behaviours (“Matthew runs faster than Sam”).
- In the second stage, which Barenboim calls the **psychological constructs phase** (ages 8–10), impressions are based on psychological or abstract attributes (“Rosemary is friendly”), but do include comparisons to others.
- Comparisons based on psychological or abstract attributes do not emerge until the **psychological comparisons phase** (11 or 12 years of age and older), which features more adult-like impressions of people (“Sara is more outgoing than Amy”).

6.2.1 Stages of Consumer Socialization

We propose that consumer socialization be viewed as a developmental process occurring in a series of stages as children become socialized into their roles as consumers. Changes occur as children move through three stages of consumer socialization—

- the **perceptual stage** (ages 3–7): The perceptual stage derives its name from the overwhelming emphasis that children in this stage place on perceptual as opposed to abstract or symbolic thought.
- the **analytical stage** (ages 7–11): The analytical stage is named for the vast improvements we see at this stage in children’s abilities to approach matters in more detailed and analytical ways; and
- the **reflective stage** (age 11–adult): Finally, the reflective stage derives its name from the ability of children of this age to reflect on the complex social contexts and meanings related to consumption.

These stages are characterized along several dimensions that capture important shifts in knowledge development, decision-making skills, and influence strategies, as described below in each section— Sections 6.2.1 through 6.2.3 in more detail.

6.2.1 PERCEPTUAL STAGE

The perceptual stage (ages 3–7) is characterized by a general orientation toward the immediate and readily observable perceptual features of the marketplace. Piaget’s notion of “perceptual boundedness” describes these children well, as does his idea of “centration” on single dimensions of objects and events. Children’s consumer knowledge is based on perceptual features and distinctions, often based on a single dimension or attribute, and represented in terms of concrete details from their own observations.

These children exhibit familiarity with concepts in the marketplace, such as brands or retail stores, but rarely understand them beyond a surface level. Due to constraints in encoding and organizing information, individual objects or experiences are rarely integrated into more generalized knowledge structures with multiple dimensions, perspectives, and contingencies (“if-then” rules). Many of these same characteristics are true for consumer decision-making skills and influence strategies at the perceptual stage.

The orientation here can best be described as simple, expedient, and egocentric. Decisions are often made on the basis of very limited information, often on the basis of a single attribute that is perceptually salient (e.g., size). This strategy is rarely modified to fit different choice tasks or situations. Limited adaptivity is also a feature of children’s influence strategies. Children approach these situations from an egocentric perspective, unable to incorporate another person’s perspective in using a strategy to influence or negotiate for desired items. Although they may be aware that parents have other views, children at this age have difficulty thinking about their own perspectives and of other people simultaneously.

Advertising and Persuasion Knowledge

Much of the concern about television advertising to children has been focused on children under the age of eight, who have been found to have a limited understanding of advertising. One of the few skills that emerge during this stage is the ability to identify television commercials and distinguish them from other forms of programming.

By age five, almost all children have acquired the ability to pick out commercials from regular television programming (Blosser & Roberts, 1985; Butter, Popovich, Stackhouse, & Garner, 1981; Levin, Petros, & Petrella, 1982; Mallalieu, Palan, & Lacznia, 2005; Palmer & McDowell, 1979; Stephens & Stutts, 1982; Stutts, Vance, & Hudleson, 1981). Even 3- and 5-year-olds have been shown to discriminate commercials above chance levels (Butter, et al., 1981; Levin et al., 1982). However, the ability to identify commercials does not necessarily translate into an understanding of the “true” difference between commercials and programs (entertainment vs. selling intent).

Children under the age of six or seven usually describe the difference between commercials and programs using simple perceptual cues, such as “commercials are short” (Butter et al., 1981; Palmer & McDowell, 1979; Ward, 1972). Young children often view advertising as entertainment (e.g., “commercials are funny”) or as a form of unbiased information (e.g., “commercials tell you about things you can buy”).

Although preschool children may implicitly understand that commercials include mainly positive statements about advertised products (Pine & Veasey, 2003), explicit understanding of the selling intent of advertising does not emerge until many children are seven or eight years of age (Macklin, 1985; Ward, Wackman, & Wartella, 1977). For example, in a landmark study with first graders (6 to 7-year-olds), only 50% described

the purpose of commercials as trying to sell something (Robertson & Rossiter, 1974).

Product and Brand Knowledge

In addition to advertising, products and brands are the most salient aspects of the marketplace for young consumers. Products and brands are advertised on television, displayed in stores, and found in the home. Even before they are able to read, children as young as two or three years of age can recognize familiar packages in the store and familiar characters on products such as toys and clothing (Derscheid, Kwon, & Fang, 1996; Haynes, Burts, Dukes, & Cloud, 1993).

By preschool, children begin to recall brand names from seeing them advertised on television or featured on product packages, especially if the brand names are associated with salient visual cues such as colours, pictures, or cartoon characters (Macklin, 1996). By the time children reach first grade, most can recall at least one brand in popular child-oriented product categories, such as candy and fast food (Ward et al., 1977). During this time, children develop a preference for particular brands.

Children begin to express a preference for familiar branded items over generic offerings in the preschool years (Hite & Hite, 1995), with preference for branded items escalating further as children enter elementary school (Ward et al., 1977). In a clever study analyzing children's letters to Santa, Otnes, Kim, and Kim (1994) found that about 50% of children's gift requests were for specific branded (toy and game) items, with the vast majority of children (85%) mentioning at least one brand name in their letter to Santa.

Despite these developments, children's understanding of products and brands is limited by a focus on perceptual attributes that are visually dominant, such as shape, size, or colour. Product categorization is a vivid illustration of this point. Although children learn to group or categorize products at an early age, young children rely on highly visible perceptual attributes to categorize products and discriminate brands (John & Lakshmi-Ratan, 1992; Klees, Olson, & Wilson, 1988).

For example, in a study by John and Sujun (1990), preschoolers (ages 4–5) grouped beverage products based on having similar packaging (e.g., cans vs. bottles), label colours (e.g., green vs. red), and size (e.g., 2-litre vs. 16 oz. bottles). Older children (ages 9–10) placed more emphasis on underlying attributes such as taste (e.g., cola vs. lemon-lime) or carbonation (e.g., orange juice vs. soft drink).

Shopping Knowledge and Skills

A major accomplishment at this stage is an understanding of money as a medium of exchange. Early childhood is a period of rapid development in abilities to understand where money comes from, to identify specific coins and bill values, and to carry out transactions with money involving simple

addition and subtraction (Marshall, 1964; Marshall & MacGruder, 1960; Strauss, 1952).

Significant jumps in knowledge occur between preschool and first and second-grade, with most second-graders having acquired many of the basic concepts for understanding the exchange of money for goods and services. Also developing is an understanding of the basic sequence of events involved in the shopping process. Children acquire a vast amount of experience as an observer of the shopping process at very early ages, but these experiences do not result in an understanding of the basic shopping script until children reach the preschool or kindergarten years (Berti & Bombi, 1988; Karsten, 1996).

Karsten (1996) illustrates this point in her study with kindergartners through fourth-graders, who were asked to participate in a “shopping game.” Each child was shown a small toy with a price tag and was given money to buy the item at a play store. A store area was set up nearby with a small cash register, containing visible amounts of coins and bills. Children were asked to show the interviewer how they would buy the toy in the store. Even the youngest children in the study enacted the basic shopping script. Kindergartners understood that one needed to select an item, check on the money available, place it on the cashier’s counter, wait for the cashier to offer change, and obtain a receipt.

Decision-Making Skills and Abilities

Children assume the role of consumer decision-makers at a young age. During the period from preschool to early elementary school, one of the most important skills to emerge is the ability to adjust information search according to the costs and benefits of additional search. Preschoolers can adjust their information search according to either costs or benefits (Davidson & Hudson, 1988, experiment 1), but adjusting information search in line with both costs and benefits emerges later as children move into elementary school.

In a study with 4- to 7-year-olds, Gregan-Paxton and John (1995) found that 6- to 7-year-olds modified their search behaviour in line with the appropriate cost-benefit trade-offs, gathering the least amount of information in the condition with the least favourable cost-benefit profile (high cost, low benefit) and the most information in the condition with the most favourable cost-benefit profile (low cost, high benefit).

Younger children (ages 4–5) were less discerning, however, gathering the most information for one of the conditions warranting a very modest degree of search (low cost, low benefit) and much less information for one of the conditions warranting the most extensive information search (low cost, high benefit). The type of information gathered is often perceptual in nature, whether or not it is relevant to the decision at hand (Wartella, Wackman, Ward, Shamir, & Alexander, 1979).

Once information is gathered, young children do not always utilize the information in an effective manner. Kindergarten children often rely on a

single attribute or dimension in forming preferences, comparing products, or choosing one alternative from a set of options (Bahn, 1986; Capon & Kuhn, 1980; Ward et al., 1977; Wartella et al., 1979). The focus on perceptual data and single attributes is the hallmark of decision-making in children at the perceptual stage.

Purchase Influence and Negotiation Strategies

Children influence purchases at a very young age. At this stage, children approach influence attempts from an egocentric perspective, with the goal of getting what they want instead of persuading parents who may have a different viewpoint on the purchase. Toddlers and preschool children exert their influence in a very direct way, often pointing to products and occasionally grabbing them off store shelves for deposit inside their parent's shopping cart (Rust, 1993).

As children become more verbal, they ask for products by name, sometimes begging, screaming and whining to get what they want (McNeal, 1992). For frequently-purchased items, such as snack food and cereal, children are often able to exert their influence simply by asking (Isler, Popper, & Ward, 1987), due to parents who become more accepting of children's preferences for such items and more comfortable with the idea of occasionally yielding to those preferences.

Consumption Motives and Values

Consumer socialization involves more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to the consumer role. It also includes the adoption of motives and values pertaining to consumption activities. Researchers have addressed these developments by focusing on the adoption of social motivations for consumption, emphasizing consumption for social expression and status, and materialistic values, emphasizing the acquisition of material goods as a means of achieving personal happiness, success, and self-fulfillment.

Research suggests that children value material goods from a very young age, sometimes favouring them above all else. Goldberg and Gorn (1978) provide an interesting illustration in a study with 4- to 5-year-old boys. Children saw an ad for a new toy ("Ruckus Raisers") and were then given a choice between two hypothetical playmates: one described as "very nice" that did not own the new toy and one described as "not so nice" but owning the new toy. A majority of the children selected the boy with the new toy. Children also made choices from two hypothetical play situations: playing alone with the new toy or playing in a sandbox with friends (without the toy). Again, a majority of children selected the play situation with the new toy. However, children's desires for material goods at this stage appear to be driven by rather simple considerations, such as novelty or quantity.

Baker and Gentry (1996) provide an example in their study of collecting as a hobby among first and fifth-graders. Children of all ages collected similar types of items—such as sports cards, dolls, and rocks—but did so

for different reasons. First graders often compared their possessions to those of others in terms of quantity. Collecting appeared to be simply a way of getting more than someone else.

Among fifth-graders, however, the motivations for collecting had more social connotations. Collecting was appreciated as a way of socially expressing one's uniqueness and attaining a sense of personal achievement by having things that others do not. These findings are consistent with our descriptions of children in the perceptual stage, who value material goods on a perceptual dimension (quantity), and the analytical stage, who see things quite differently by their social comparison skills and perspective-taking abilities.

6.2.2 ANALYTICAL STAGE

Enormous changes take place both cognitively and socially, as children move into the analytical stage (ages 7–11). This period contains some of the most important developments in terms of consumer knowledge, skills, and consumption motivations. The shift from perceptual thought to more symbolic thought noted by Piaget, along with dramatic increases in information processing abilities, results in a more sophisticated understanding of the marketplace, a more complex set of knowledge about concepts such as advertising and brands, and a new perspective that goes beyond their own feelings and motives.

Concepts such as product categories or prices are thought of in terms of functional or underlying dimensions, products and brands are analyzed and discriminated on the basis of more than one dimension or attribute, and generalizations are drawn from one's experiences. Reasoning proceeds at a more abstract level, setting the stage for knowledge structures that include information about abstract concepts such as the advertiser's motives as well as the notion of contingencies (e.g., sweetness is an appealing attribute for candy but not soup).

The ability to analyze stimuli on multiple dimensions and the acknowledgement of contingencies bring about vast changes in children's consumer decision-making skills and strategies. Now, children exhibit more thoughtfulness in their choices, considering more than just a single perceptually salient attribute and employing a decision strategy that makes sense given the task environment. As a result, children are more flexible in the approach they bring to making decisions, allowing them to be more adaptive. These tendencies also emerge in the way children try to influence and negotiate for desired items. The approach is more strategic, based on their newfound ability to think from the perspective of a parent or friend and adapt their influence strategy accordingly.

Advertising and Persuasion Knowledge

A full understanding of advertising intent usually emerges by the time most children are 7 to 8 years old (Bever, Smith, Bengen, & Johnson, 1975; Blosser & Roberts, 1985; Lawlor & Prothero, 2003; Robertson & Rossiter, 1974; Rubin, 1974; Ward et al., 1977). Children see the

persuasive intent of commercials quite clearly, coming to terms with the fact that advertisers are “trying to get people to buy something.” In a study with first-, third-, and fifth-grade boys, Robertson and Rossiter (1974) found that the understanding of persuasive intent increased dramatically from only 52.7% of first graders (6- to 7-year-olds) to 87.1% of third-graders (8- to 9-year-olds) to 99% of fifth-graders (10- to 11-year-olds).

This trend supports our description of children in the analytical stage, who are capable of viewing advertising from several perspectives, the buyer’s (assistive intent) and the advertiser’s (persuasive intent). Children in the analytical stage also recognize the existence of bias and deception in advertising. Children aged 8 years and older no longer believe that “commercials always tell the truth” (Bever et al., 1975; Robertson & Rossiter, 1974; Ward, 1972; Ward et al., 1977), with beliefs about the truthfulness of advertising becoming even more negative as children move toward adolescence (Bever et al., 1975; Robertson & Rossiter, 1974; Rossiter & Robertson, 1976; Ward, 1972; Ward et al., 1977).

For example, Ward et al. (1977) report that the percentage of kindergartners, third-graders, and sixth-graders believing that advertising never or only sometimes tells the truth increases from 50% to 88% to 97%, respectively. Moreover, older children also understand why commercials are sometimes untruthful, connecting lying to persuasive intent (e.g., “they want to sell products to make money, so they have to make the product look better than it is”).

Armed with an understanding of advertising’s persuasive intent and scepticism about the truthfulness of advertising claims, children over the age of eight are often viewed as having a “cognitive defence” against advertising that shields them from being unfairly persuaded. Although this scenario seems straightforward, evidence regarding the extent to which children’s general attitudes and beliefs about advertising function as cognitive defences is quite mixed.

Early survey research was successful in finding moderate links between children’s knowledge of advertising’s persuasive intent and their desire for advertised products (Robertson & Rossiter, 1974), but more recent experimental research finds that children’s cognitive defences have little or no effect on evaluations and preferences for advertised products (Christenson, 1982; Ross et al., 1984). By the time children reach middle childhood, they can name multiple brands in most child-oriented product categories such as cereal, snacks, and toys (McNeal, 1992; Otnes et al., 1994; Rossiter, 1976; Rubin, 1974; Ward et al., 1977) and can name at least one brand in more adult-oriented product categories such as cameras and gasoline (Ward et al., 1977).

Between early and middle childhood, children also learn a great deal about the underlying structure of product categories. Children shift from using highly visible perceptual cues to more important underlying cues as a basis for categorizing and judging similarity among products (John & Sujana, 1990; John & Lakshmi-Ratan, 1992; Klees et al., 1988). By third-

or fourth-grade, children are learning to group objects according to taxonomic relationships (e.g., belts and socks are items of clothing), attributes that indicate the relationship of categories to one another (e.g., fruit juices and soft drinks differ on the attribute of naturalness), and attributes inherent to the core concept of categories (e.g., taste, more than colour, is central to the category of soft drinks). These are termed underlying, deep structure, or functional attributes because they convey the true meaning or function a category might serve.

The shift to functional or underlying categorization cues around 8 to 10 years of age is consistent with symbolic thinking that characterizes children in the analytical stage. Early to middle childhood is also a time of greater understanding of the symbolic meanings and status accorded to products. Nowhere is children's increasing understanding of the social significance of goods more in evidence than in studies of consumption symbolism (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; Belk, Mayer, & Driscoll, 1984; Mayer & Belk, 1982).

Shopping Knowledge and Skills

As children move into the analytical stage, they begin to understand more about the purpose and nature of retail establishments. The changes parallel those seen with understanding the purpose of advertising. At age 5, stores are seen as a source of snacks or sweets, but children are unsure of why stores exist except to fulfill their own needs and wants. At age 9, however, there is an understanding that retail stores are owned by people selling goods at a profit. Thus, there is a considerable shift in understanding the purpose of retail establishments from the preschool years (an egocentric view of stores as fulfilling my wants) to the early elementary school years (a dual view of stores as profit centres that fulfill consumer wants) (McNeal, 1964).

This shift is consistent with our description of children in the perceptual stage, where children have an egocentric perspective, versus those in the analytical stage, where children can take another person's perspective, such as retailers who have a profit motive. Shopping scripts also undergo development as children gain more shopping experience and transform these experiences into more sophisticated scripts.

John and Whitney (1986) illustrate these developments in a study with children ages 4–5, 6–7, and 9–10 years old. Children heard different stories about a boy or girl exchanging or returning a faulty product to a store. The amount of experience was manipulated by varying the number of stories read to children, resulting in low (1 story), medium (3 stories), or high (5 stories) levels of experience. After hearing the assigned number of stories, children were asked to describe how one would go about returning or exchanging a product. As more information became available, 9- to 10-year-olds produced scripts that were generally more abstract and complex in terms of conditional events (if “x” happens, then do “y”).

Decision-Making Skills and Abilities

Some of the most important developments in decision-making skills surface in the analytical stage. Children gather information from a variety of sources (Ward et al., 1977), focus on more relevant information and ignore irrelevant information (Davidson, 1991b; Howse, Best, & Stone, 2003; Wartella et al., 1979), consider functional/performance attributes in addition to perceptual features (Ward et al., 1977), use more attributes and dimensions in forming preferences (Bahn, 1986; Capon & Kuhn, 1980; Ward et al., 1977), and more carefully consider these preferences in making choices (Roedder, Sternthal, & Calder, 1983).

Children also begin to use a variety of compensatory and non-compensatory choice strategies (Bereby-Meyer, Assor, & Katz, 2004; Howse, Best, & Stone, 2003). Wartella et al. (1979) provide a vivid example of these developments in a study with kindergartners and third-graders. Children chose a gift for a friend from a set of candies described as having different amounts of various ingredients (e.g., chocolate, raisins). To provide attribute importance information, the ingredient preferences of the gift recipient were also described (e.g., loves chocolate and hates raisins). The choice alternatives (candies) and attribute importance information were designed in such a way that the chosen gift revealed the child's choice strategy –

- best single attribute (candy with the highest amount of the most important ingredient),
- variety of attributes (candy with the highest amount of different ingredients),
- lexicographic strategy (candy with the highest amount of the most important ingredient and, in the case of a tie, on the highest amount of the second most important ingredient), and
- a weighted adding strategy (candy with the highest amounts of ingredients multiplied by importance weights for ingredients).

Kindergartners chose candies with the most ingredients, regardless of their importance to the gift recipient. However, third-graders used a variety of strategies, split between the single best attribute, a variety of attributes, and lexicographic strategies. The weighted adding strategy, which is compensatory in nature, was used by only a small percentage of the older children. These trends, especially the use of the single best attribute and lexicographic strategies by older children, signal the use of non-compensatory strategies in children by the time they reach middle childhood.

Purchase Influence and Negotiation Strategies

Children exert more influence as they grow older (Atkin, 1978; Darley & Lim, 1986; Jenkins, 1979; Moschis & Mitchell, 1986; Nelson, 1979; Rust, 1993; Ward & Wackman, 1972; Swinyard & Sim, 1987; Ward et al.,

1977). They have the most influence over purchases of child-relevant items (e.g., cereal, toys, clothes), a moderate degree of influence for family activities (e.g., vacations, restaurants), and the least influence for purchases of consumer durables and expensive items (Belch, Belch, & Ceresino, 1985; Corfman & Harlam, 1997; Foxman & Tansuhaj, 1988; Foxman, Tansuhaj, & Ekstrom, 1989; Isler et al., 1987; Swinyard & Sim, 1987).

Influence attempts also become more sophisticated at this stage. Bargaining, compromise, and persuasion enter the picture. Instead of simple purchase requests, which are then accepted or rejected by parents, interactions between parents and children of this age feature more mutual discussion and compromise (Rust, 1993). Discussion of this sort is made possible by the fact that children are developing greater abilities to see multiple points of view, such as theirs as well as their parents, simultaneously.

As we have noted, this dual perspective is characteristic of older children in the analytical stage. Children are also primed to assume a more active role in purchase discussions after years of listening to their parents describe why certain requests can or cannot be honoured (Palan & Wilkes, 1997; Popper, 1979), in effect learning to reason, persuade, and negotiate for what they want. Finally, it is also the case that extended discussions become more necessary as children shift purchase requests from inexpensive items such as candy and cereal to more expensive items, including sporting goods, clothes, and electronic goods (McNeal, 1992)

Consumption Motives and Values

As children approach adolescence, they begin to understand the social meanings and status attached to possessions. As a result, social motivations for consumption emerge. In Baker and Gentry's (1996) study, described earlier, the motivations of older children (ages 10–11) for collecting items included social ones, such as expressing their uniqueness or signalling an achievement.

Materialistic values also begin to surface during this period (Achenreiner, 1997; Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchio, & Bamossy, 2003). A greater understanding of the symbolic meanings and status accorded to possessions sets the stage for desiring material goods for instrumental reasons, such as happiness or popularity. For example, Goldberg et al. (2003) found evidence of materialism in a study of 9- to 14-year-olds.

Children higher in materialism exhibited behaviours we have come to expect with materialistic values, such as shopping more, saving less, and being more responsive to advertising and marketing promotions.

6.2.3 REFLECTIVE STAGE

The reflective stage (ages 11–16) is characterized by further development in several dimensions of cognitive and social development. Knowledge about marketplace concepts such as branding and pricing becomes more

mature and complex as children develop more sophisticated cognitive and social skills. Many of these changes are more a matter of degree than kind. More distinct is the shift in orientation to a more reflective way of thinking and reasoning, as children move into adolescence and become more focused on the social meanings and underpinnings of the consumer marketplace.

A heightened awareness of other people's perspectives, along with a need to shape their own identity and conform to group expectations, results in more attention to the social aspects of being a consumer, making choices, and consuming brands. Consumer decisions are made in a more adaptive manner, depending on the situation and task. In a similar fashion, attempts to influence parents and friends reflect more social awareness as adolescents become more strategic, favouring strategies that they think will be better received than a simple direct approach.

Knowledge of Advertising and Persuasion

In the reflective stage, advertising knowledge develops even further, especially in terms of understanding the advertiser's selling tactics. Although younger children may have a general understanding of why commercials are sometimes untruthful, the ability to detect specific instances of bias and deception does not arrive until adolescence. For example, in a study with 7- to 12-year-olds, Bever et al. (1975) report that most of the 7- to 10-year-olds in their study could not detect misleading advertising and admitted to their difficulties:

“‘[Advertisers] can fake well,’ they said, and ‘you don’t really know what’s true until you’ve tried the product’” (p. 114). Eleven- to twelve-year-olds were more discriminating, using nuances of voice, manner, and language to detect misleading advertising. These children used clues such as “overstatements and the way they [the actors] talk,” “when they use visual tricks or fake things,” and when the commercial “goes on and on in too much detail” (p. 119).

Clearly, developments in perspective-taking that occur as children enter adolescence facilitate the ability to associate such nuances in advertising executions with deception or exaggeration. Knowledge of advertising tactics and appeals becomes evident as children approach early adolescence (11–14 years of age) (Boush, Friestad, & Rose, 1994; Friestad & Wright, 1994; Paget, Kritt, & Bergemann, 1984).

Although younger children may recognize that certain commercial features such as celebrity endorsers are meant to induce a positive reaction, they do not have an explicit understanding of how these features link to persuasion (Lawlor & Prothero, 2003) and underestimate the wide variety of commercial features (e.g., jingles, contests, animation) used by advertisers to persuade (Mallalieu, Palan, & Laczniak, 2005). Advertisements are also valued as a device for social interaction, serving as a focus of conversations with peers, a means of belonging and group membership, and a conduit for transferring and conveying meaning in their daily lives (Ritson & Elliott, 1999).

Product and Brand Knowledge

Brand knowledge continues to develop as children move from middle childhood into adolescence. Awareness and recall of brand names continues to increase, for both child-oriented product categories as well as more adult-oriented ones (Keiser, 1975; Ward et al., 1977). This is to be expected as adult-oriented products—such as cars, computers, and cameras—become more relevant to older children who are potential consumers of these items.

More interesting, however, are the developments that occur in children's understanding of the symbolic meanings of products and brands. As discussed earlier, an understanding of consumption symbolism begins to emerge by the second-grade, but is not well developed until the sixth-grade. This is especially true for understanding symbolic meanings attached to brands. Brands not only confer status to their owners, but also begin to symbolize group identity and a sense of belonging to certain groups (Jamison, 1996). These developments are consistent with our description of children in the reflective stage, who form impressions based on social comparisons of factors such as personality, social standing, and possessions.

Shopping Knowledge and Skills

Despite the fact that children understand many aspects of the shopping environment by middle childhood, they have relatively undeveloped notions about pricing until they reach adolescence. By the time children are 8 or 9 years old, they know that products have prices, know where to look for price information, and know that there are price variations among products and stores (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981). However, they have fairly simple notions of how these prices reflect supply and demand in the marketplace.

For example, adults see prices as a reflection of the utility or function of the item to the consumer, the costs of inputs incurred by the manufacturer to make the item, and the relative scarcity of the item in the marketplace (Fox & Kehret-Ward, 1985). Not until early adolescence do children perceive a full range of connections between price and value (Berti & Bombi, 1988; Fox & Kehret-Ward, 1985). A study by Fox and Kehret-Ward (1990), where children were asked to explain the basis of prices for selling a bicycle, provides a nice illustration.

Preschoolers focused on a product's perceptual features, especially size, as the basis for pricing, but did not articulate a theory for why these features provide more value. Ten-year-olds linked price to perceptual features (size or fancy features), but reasoned that a higher price would be present due to the amount of production inputs required. Only 13-year-olds exhibited a more abstract level of reasoning, viewing prices as a function of the quality of the product's inputs and the preferences of potential buyers.

Decision-Making Skills and Abilities

During the adolescent years, several changes occur in the use of information sources. Older adolescents seek out additional sources of information, generally favouring peers and friends over parents and mass media (Moore & Stephens, 1975; Moschis & Moore, 1979; Stephens & Moore, 1975; Tootelian & Gaedeke, 1992). They develop a greater ability to ignore irrelevant information, focus on more relevant information (Davidson, 1991b), use attribute information in forming preferences and making choices (Capon & Kuhn, 1980; Klayman, 1985; Nakajima & Hotta, 1989), and apply decision-making strategies more appropriately to make better choices (Bereby-Meyer, Assor, & Katz, 2004; Howse, Best, & Stone, 2003).

Strategies for more complex decision environments include more choice alternatives and more information per alternative. Adult decision-makers adapt to more complex environments in several ways, including restricting a search to a smaller percentage of the available information, focusing their search on more promising alternatives, and switching from compensatory choice strategies to non-compensatory ones that are less cognitively demanding (see Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993).

These adaptive responses develop in children as they approach adolescence, being consistently exhibited by the time children reach 11 or 12 years of age (Davidson, 1991a, 1991b; Grogan-Paxton & John, 1997; Klayman, 1985). Children's abilities undergo further refinement as they move into late adolescence, using a wider array of simplifying strategies in a more systematic manner (Nakajima & Hotta, 1989). In contrast, younger children (second-graders) responded to increasing complexity by making smaller adjustments in their search strategies without using a consistent simplifying strategy such as the conjunctive rule.

Purchase Influence and Negotiation Strategies

By the time they reach early adolescence, children have an expanded repertoire of influence strategies available to them (Kim, Lee, & Hall, 1991; Manchanda & Moore-Shay, 1996; Palan & Wilkes, 1997). These strategies are more sophisticated, appealing to parents in seemingly rational ways, and are used in a flexible manner to match the situation or answer the objection of a parent.

Palan and Wilkes (1997) provide an illustration of this growing sophistication in a study conducted with 12- to 15-year-olds and their parents. Using interviews, the authors identified a diverse set of purchase influence strategies used by adolescents:

- (1) bargaining strategies, including reasoning and offers to pay for part of the purchase;
- (2) persuasion strategies, including expressions of opinions, persistent requesting, and begging;

- (3) request strategies, including straightforward requests and expressions of needs or wants; and
- (4) emotional strategies, including anger, pouting, guilt trips, and sweet talk.

Bargaining and persuasion were favourites among the group of adolescents, with emotional strategies favoured least. Variations in frequency appear to be driven, in part, by which strategies adolescents perceive to be the most effective in obtaining desired items. Strategies, such as reasoning and offers to pay for part of an item are seen as very effective; strategies, such as begging and getting angry are seen as least effective.

Adolescents also adapt the strategies they use depending on what they view as most effective in influencing parents. One way of doing so is by duplicating the strategies used by their parents for responding to their purchase requests. For example, adolescents perceived reasoning as the most effective influence strategy when they came from families where parents reported the frequent use of reasoning strategies.

Also perceived as effective were influence strategies that had a logical connection with the objections parents raised to a purchase request. For example, in families where parents often refused purchase requests by stating the family could not afford the item, adolescents knew it was effective to use strategies that reduced the monetary outlay, such as offers to pay for part of the item.

Consumption Motives and Values

With a keen sense of social meanings and status according to material possessions, teenagers are strongly motivated by social considerations in purchasing goods and services. Certain products and brand names not only confer status to their owners, but also begin to symbolize group identity and a sense of belonging to distinct social groups. Products such as clothing are particularly notable in this regard, as reported by Jamison (1996) in a study with children ages 11–12. Clothes are described as a means of fitting in and as a way to identify membership in a particular subgroup, such as the “preppies” and “hip-hops.”

Chaplin and John (2005) provide an illustration of social motivations for consumption linked to self-identity in a study with 8-to 18-year-olds. Participants were asked to construct a collage, using a set of pictures and words, to answer the question, “Who Am I?” Provided were pictures and words referring to specific hobbies, sports, personality traits, TV/movie characters, and brand names. Results indicated that older children (ages 12–18) included more brands of their collages than did younger children (ages 8–9). In addition, teenagers explained these self-brand connections in social terms, describing how certain brands exuded their personality or group affiliation, whereas younger children made self-brand connections on a more concrete basis (e.g., owning an item with the brand). Thus, for teenagers, social motivations for owning brands are strong because brands

are seen as reflecting one's self-concept. Not surprisingly, social motivations for consumption are associated with higher levels of materialism.

A recent study by Chaplin and John (2007) suggests that materialism increases as children move into their adolescent years. Children 8 to 18 years old were asked to construct a collage to answer the question, "What makes me happy?" For this purpose, participants were given a set of pictures and words, which included non-material themes (e.g., friends, good grades, hobbies) and material goods (e.g., money, computer games, brands). Children in the middle age group (ages 12–13) selected more material goods for their collages than either the youngest (ages 8–9) or oldest (ages 16–18) age groups.

Given that happiness is an instrumental goal associated with materialism, these findings suggest that children just entering adolescence exhibit the strongest materialistic tendencies. Interestingly, these tendencies are somewhat abated in older adolescents, who begin to focus more on achievements (e.g., good grades, getting into a good college) than material goods as a means for achieving happiness.

We turn now to a review of empirical findings pertaining to stages of consumer socialization. We begin our discussion by examining evidence about children's consumer knowledge, skills, and motivation for the first stage of consumer socialization—the perceptual stage.

Discussion

The consumer socialization stages being proposed here capture important changes in how children think, what they know, and how they express themselves as consumers. These stage descriptions, similar to other stage frameworks found in child psychology, have tremendous heuristic value. Yet, it is important to keep several caveats in mind:

- First, the ages associated with each stage are approximations based on the general tendencies of children in that age group. To constrain the number of stages to a reasonable number, some degree of variance among children in an age range was tolerated. For example -

children 7 to 11 years of age are identified with the analytical stage, even though differences in degree clearly exist at the extremes. To deal with variations of this sort, we formulated our stage descriptions to be most representative of children in the middle to end of each age range and allowed the age ranges to overlap at transition points between stages.

- Second, we note that the nature of the task environment or marketing stimuli can alter the age at which certain knowledge or behaviours would occur. Tasks that are more complex, requiring consideration of more information or more in-depth knowledge, can be expected to increase the age at which children appear to have mastered a particular concept.

Now moving towards the end of this unit, let us have a look at various challenges in this area of consumer socialization.

6.3 CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our framework views consumer socialization as progressing in a series of three stages—perceptual, analytical, and reflective—described by changes in children’s knowledge and skills during childhood and adolescence. We have reviewed empirical evidence consistent with these stages, documenting children’s growing sophistication about products, brands, advertising, shopping, pricing, decision-making strategies, influence approaches, and consumption motives and values. It is also the case, however, that significant gaps remain in our understanding of these stages of consumer socialization. These gaps, in topic areas as well as research methodologies, constitute challenges for future research. They are discussed below.

Advertising and Persuasion Knowledge

Due to concerns about advertising to young children, researchers have focused their attention on children under the age of twelve. We know a great deal about how an understanding of advertising develops in children before adolescence. However, we still have much to learn about developments during adolescence. The few studies including adolescents suggest that important developments occur during this period, such as a more sophisticated understanding of specific advertising tactics, types of bias, and social context.

Further examination of these topics would contribute to our understanding of how persuasion knowledge develops, as well as provide insight into public policy concerns about the adolescent response to advertising for products, such as cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. Further research would also be welcome to explore how advertising and persuasion knowledge is utilized in children’s responses to persuasive communications (Wright, Friestad, & Boush, 2005).

Existing research focuses on what children know or believe about advertising, assuming that once advertising knowledge is acquired, it will be used as a cognitive filter or defence when children are exposed to persuasive messages. Yet, the few studies that examine how advertising knowledge is actually used by children in viewing situations suggest that more attention should be paid to understanding when such knowledge is accessed and used. The evidence to date suggests that cognitive filters and defences against advertising may emerge during early adolescence, providing yet another reason for more attention to developments during the reflective stage.

Product and Brand Knowledge

Perhaps the greatest challenge in this area is a better understanding of how children relate to brands at different stages. Consumption symbolism is an important topic, yet the few studies addressing this issue focus on products, not brands. Although a few, studies of children's relationships with brands suggest that important changes occur with the approach of adolescence. Current research points to important qualitative changes in the way adolescents view brands, yet we lack descriptive detail about the nature of these changes. Brand relationship frameworks (Fournier, 1998) would be especially useful in describing how these relationships develop from adolescence to adulthood.

Shopping Skills

Despite the acknowledgement that children become enthusiastic shoppers at a young age, research is needed to understand the development of shopping skills, involving comparisons between prices, volumes, sizes, and the like. Surprisingly, we were unable to locate a single study focused on this topic within the last twenty years.

Given the large body of research in child psychology on children's developing mathematical abilities and strategies (see Siegler & Jenkins, 1989), it would appear to be an opportune time to revisit issues related to shopping skills. A related topic, children's understanding of pricing and value, would also be a natural candidate for further research. Both topics would be welcome additions to our knowledge about the analytical stage, when mathematical abilities and abilities to integrate information converge, producing a situation conducive to major improvements in shopping skills.

Decision-Making Skills and Abilities

Perhaps the most noticeable gap in this literature is a basic understanding of what decision strategies children possess at different ages. Exploring the age at which children effectively utilize compensatory and non-compensatory strategies would be particularly important. Existing research provides some clues, but empirical data is particularly limited for younger children in the perceptual stage.

Also important would be research exploring decision-making goals. To date, research has proceeded as if children shared the same decision-making goals as adults, such as buying the "best" product or making a good decision with the least cognitive effort. It may well be that young children have quite different goals in mind, such as choosing a novel product, being surprised, or having fun. In fact, this may provide a richer explanation for some of the findings regarding age differences in decision-making skills and behaviour.

Purchase Influence and Negotiation Strategies

Investigations using in-depth interviews have provided vivid examples of the growing sophistication of older children and adolescents. Observational research, often conducted in grocery stores, has provided a picture of influence attempts for very young children accompanying their parents to the store. What is missing is research focused on children between these age groups, primarily children in the analytical stage between the ages of 7 and 11.

As we have seen, much social development occurs during this period and it would be useful to track how changes in areas such as social perspective-taking facilitate the development of purchase influence and negotiation strategies. Also useful would be research looking at the connection between influence and negotiation strategies and other aspects of children's consumer knowledge and behaviour.

One example would be the relationship between purchase influence strategies and advertising knowledge. Although these areas have existed independently, they both deal with persuasion—how to persuade someone else or how someone tries to persuade you. Another example would be the relationship between purchase influence and negotiation strategies and the parent-child conflict, sometimes viewed as a negative effect of advertising to children.

Consumption Motives and Values

Until recently, adolescents have been the focus of most research in this area. Studies including younger children are just beginning to emerge. As we have seen, perspective-taking and impression formation undergo dramatic development from middle childhood to adolescence. These developments in social understanding are probably linked to important changes in views of consumption, yet we have little descriptive detail to identify the nature of these changes. Studies with children in the analytical stage (ages 7-11) would be useful in understanding the relationship between social and cognitive development and aspects of consumption motives and values.

Methodological Approaches

In addressing gaps in our knowledge, there are also challenges in designing appropriate methodologies for studying consumer socialization across a wide age range. Sample design, stimuli selection, and measurement design are issues common to researchers working with children of any age.

First, in terms of sample design, selecting the appropriate age groups can present difficulties. Often, researchers are addressing a specific question for the first time, without prior research to guide sample selection. Concerns about selecting age groups that will uncover developmental patterns, if they exist, are common. Questions about the youngest or oldest age group that should be included are often involved. Guidance on these

issues is available by using the stages of consumer socialization described here.

Selection of experimental stimuli also requires careful consideration. Unless the age range being examined is quite narrow, the researcher will need to be aware of age differences in familiarity, relevance, and interest in stimuli such as advertisements, product categories, brands, choice situations, and tasks. Tailoring the stimuli to each age group will not work if the objective is to compare age groups.

The best solution is to find stimuli that are familiar and appeal to children across age groups. If this is not possible, which is likely for studies spanning a wide age range, the next best solution is to find stimuli that are familiar and appealing to the youngest age group, while holding some appeal to the oldest age group. The selection is tipped in favour of younger children because it is usually this age group that is found to have a lower level of ability or skills than older children; therefore, it is important to rule out the possibility that unfamiliarity or disinterest with the stimuli contributed to younger children's poorer performance on a task.

In situations where collections of stimuli are required, such as clothing brand names, a mixture of brands can be used that are of interest to younger children (e.g., Limited Too), older children (e.g., Express), and children of all ages (e.g., Nike). Designing measures to assess consumer knowledge, skills, or values is perhaps the most pressing problem in moving research forward in this area. In the past, researchers have used a mixture of traditional techniques, with emphasis on rating scales, recall and recognition measures, and unstructured interview questions.

Adjustments are often made to accommodate young children, but measurement concerns persist in using these techniques. Unstructured questions require greater verbalization abilities than many young children have at their disposal. Added to this is the fact that many of the unstructured questions are rather abstract, without the concreteness that dominates thinking for children under 8 years of age. For example, questions such as "What is the purpose of advertising?" are far too abstract for children in the perceptual stage.

Rating scales reduce problems with verbalization, but present a different set of issues. Even for simple evaluative scales, such as a 1–5 smiley face scale, there are concerns that young children use only the extreme scale points (Karsten & John, 1994). For more complex scales, researchers often design statements that can be easily misinterpreted by young children. For example, in measuring materialism, we might ask young children to agree or disagree with the following statement: "Money can buy happiness." Although similar statements are used to measure materialism in adults, the meaning is different for young children. Youngsters often take the statement quite literally, agreeing with the statement because money can buy many things they like, such as candy and toys.

Oddly enough, rating scales can also be problematic at the other end of the age continuum. Here, the issue centres on social desirability bias among teenagers who are eager to present a positive face to interviewers. For

example, statements such as “Money can buy happiness” are quite transparent in intent, which may be more of a concern with adolescents who are eager to answer in a socially acceptable fashion. In light of these difficulties, more attention needs to be given to developing new measures and measurement techniques for children and adolescents -

- First, when using rating scales, more careful attention needs to be paid to validating the scales across age groups. Examples of recent efforts in this vein can be found in areas such as children’s attitudes toward advertising (Derbaix & Pecheux, 2003) and children’s materialism (Goldberg et al., 2003).
- Second, newer measurement techniques need to be developed to supplement more traditional forms of questioning. For example, collages have been particularly useful in measuring constructs such as children’s self-concepts and materialism (Chaplin & John, 2005, 2007). Young children are familiar with collages and can express themselves with modest amounts of verbalization; for older children, the collage task allows the researcher to be less transparent, diminishing social desirability bias.
- Finally, researchers need to seek out opportunities to assess children’s consumer behaviour in more naturalistic settings. Examples include studies of children’s requests for Christmas presents (Otnes et al., 1994) and decision-making research using choice games and gift choices (Gregan-Paxton & John, 1995; Wartella et al., 1979).

These methodological challenges dictate a degree of creativity and attention to detail far beyond those ever encountered in research with adult consumers. However, the rewards are considerable. Understanding consumer socialization will continue to be a topic of importance for many reasons. No other area of consumer behaviour research is so focused on the process and outcomes of consumer learning that evolve over time.

No other consumer segment has changed as much in purchasing power and influence in the last decade as the children and teen segment. Finally, there is probably no topic in consumer research that holds as much interest from a public policy and societal perspective, especially given recent concerns over the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and unhealthy foods. We look forward to meeting the challenges to produce a greater understanding of consumer socialization in the future.

6.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed consumer socialization and how it works. Consumer socialization is the process whereby one acquires the skills to consume, as well as the values associated with being a consumer. It involves identification with the role of the consumer in consumption society or a critical awareness of the problematic nature of being a consumer and of consumption society more generally. We also studied different stages of consumer socialization. Then we had a glance at future research and coming challenges related to it.

6.5 QUESTIONS

1. Explain consumer socialization.
2. Describe the stages of consumer socialization.
3. Discuss challenges for future research.

6.6 REFERENCES

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ADVANCES IN RESEARCH METHODS - I

Unit Structure :

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Data Mining

7.1.2 What is Data Mining?

7.1.3 Opinion Mining

7.2 Netnography

7.2.1 Data Collection in Netnography

7.2.2 Basic Principles of Online Data Capture and Collection

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7.3 Focus Group and Depth Interview

7.3.1 Focus Group

7.3.2 Depth Interview

7.4 Summary

7.5 Questions

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

- To know what is data mining?
- To know what is opinion mining?
- To know what is netnography?
- To study the depth interview and Focus group.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The internet contains billions of interconnected files of various sorts authored by hundreds of millions or billions, of people worldwide. It has forever altered how we communicate, entertain ourselves, find partners, get directions, gain a sense of community, and ask and answer questions

about a massive variety of different topics. Many of those questions are marketing and consumption-related. The internet is a social space. Like an ocean being loaded with life, the online environment offers researchers an incredibly varied and vibrant pool of rich qualitative 'data' consisting of conversations, messages, videos, drawings, photographs, music clips, avatars, comments, discussions, and much more.

In addition, many consumers use the internet –

- to make purchases,
- to view advertising,
- to gamble,
- to download coupons,
- to watch and share legally and illegally licensed material,
- to write reviews,
- to offer recommendations, and much more.

The variety and intensity of consumer and marketing experiences possible and present through online media increase every year. In this unit, we will overview and explore the major techniques that qualitative consumer and marketing researchers use to explore and analyze this rich and increasingly important environment for consumer and marketing research. However, in this book, we do not consider the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data to be obvious or hard and fast; qualitative and quantitative are not polar extremes of data, nor are they mutually exclusive ways of looking at the world. Rather, we view these labels for data as somewhat arbitrary points along a continuum that takes richly contextualized real-world observations and codes them for particular elements of content and context, consequently and inevitably stripping them of other elements of content and context. Some of this coding can involve assigning quantitative code to qualitative data, such as counting the number of words in an online posting or rating Twitter messages for their use of emotional language.

Because data mining and social network analysis collect large volumes of data that may fall on the qualitative end of the spectrum, we choose to address them in this qualitative research text, while acknowledging that data obtained through these techniques can also be aggregated quantitatively. If we view conversations, connections, and reflections of others' lived social experiences as, in some sense, "content" that can be said to exist independently of context, then we can consider the information obtained through such techniques useful for qualitative research. Then, we discuss the focus group and the in-depth interview. These research methods help to understand the data collection process.

7.1.1 Data Mining

Data mining techniques have a long history of being used in marketing and consumer research primarily to yield quantitative data (Kassarjian 1977; Iacobucci 1996). There are rare instances of qualitative academic researchers applying these useful methods. However, in the last decade, data mining has frequently been applied to online conversations and connections by 'mining' or 'scraping' text and relational data from their original source, collecting it in certain ad hoc or predetermined ways, and then analyzing or sorting it using various types of automated, semi-automated, computerized, or software-driven processes.

An increasing number of researchers are beginning to deploy these techniques with online data in order to enhance, develop, guide, and validate the findings from more contextualizing methods such as “netnography” (Jayanthi & Singh 2010; Füller et al. 2006). We will learn later about netnography in more detail in Section 7.2. For the contemporary qualitative researcher interested in using data obtained from the internet, finding tools for dealing with the collection and analysis of a large amount of data is an advantage and, increasingly, a necessity.

The field of data mining has grown up in institutional settings where enterprises have found it beneficial to collect and analyze often overwhelming amounts of data. For example, hospitals have used data mining techniques in order to spot disease and treatment-related trends in patient records. Government agencies have used data mining on their records and census data in order to understand better and cope with the need for public services. Environmental agencies must deal with massive amounts of data in order to help withstand seasonal and manmade fluctuations in weather patterns and environmental toxicity. The techniques they use to collect and analyze data are all related.

For consumer and marketing researchers, a variety of topics are of interest that can be approached using data mining techniques. For example, a marketing researcher might be interested in the total number of mentions per hour of a particular brand, such as McDonald's, on a social networking site, such as Facebook in terms of -

- What time of day do such mentions peak?
- What type of person mentions McDonald's the most?

Moving into a more qualitative type of analysis -

- what do those mentions say about McDonald's?
- Are they positive or negative?
- What topics are mentioned the most?
- What competitors are mentioned?
- What products are mentioned?

Answering these practical questions can help to illuminate the mass consciousness and popular opinions surrounding a brand, a product or service category, or almost any type of consumption imaginable. A scholarly researcher interested in market dynamics might need to follow the website, Facebook, and Twitter updates of rivals competing for market share.

Storage media for such large amounts of data are already inexpensive. Data sensors and automated programs for data collection are also becoming more common and less expensive. And cloud storage offers even larger and less expensive possibilities. The collection and storage of large amounts of data are easier than ever before. However, the biggest issues in data mining that remain involve how to analyze the data. It is important to have a basic understanding of some of the principles of data mining.

7.1.2 What is Data Mining?

Data mining is the process of discovering useful patterns or knowledge from sources of data such as databases, websites, text files, images, or videos (Liu 2008, p. 6). According to Cios et al. (2007), we can also define data mining as the attempt to 'make sense of large amounts of mostly unsupervised data, in some domain'. An essential part of this definition is that we are dealing with both - 'large amounts of data (often in hundreds of megabytes, or possibly gigabytes; some large organizations, such as NASA or Wal-Mart may deal with terabytes). Second, the term unsupervised indicates that this is naturalistic data, data for which the analyst has no predefined classes or categories; as well as data whose generation was not carefully managed or cultivated.

Finally, we see data mining as a part of a process of sense-making or knowledge creation, in which operations on vast amounts of qualitative data should provide it understandable, valid, novel, and useful. The emphasis therefore should be on an understanding of the data and on aiming toward the eventual deployment or use of results. Data mining seeks to discover useful information or knowledge from the information available in a particular database, whether that database exists in a company's private backroom servers, on a person's desktop, or the internet.

Content mining is a variety of data mining that treats data more widely, often including visual images, audio-visual files, and sound files. Web mining is another subset of data mining that 'aims to discover useful information or knowledge from Web hyperlinks, page contents, and usage logs' (Liu 2008).

In data collection, information can be extracted from the content of web pages, user access patterns determined from usage logs, and the structure of various technical and social relationships determined from various types of linkages, such as hyperlinks, mail directions, or message responses.

The most important distinguishing characteristic of data mining is that rather than beginning with a particular model and then fitting data to it, as with structural equation models and their goodness of fit indices, data mining attempts to begin with the data. In short, although its methods are usually mathematical, the approach is inductive; it is data-driven.

Data mining begins with large datasets and tries to build a data model that is not overly complex, but still describes the data well. In other words, the rule of Occam's razor is followed. In this inductive characteristic, and its 'knowledge discovery' or 'knowledge creation' approach, data mining intersects with qualitative methods that seek to find patterns of meaning from complex naturalistic situations.

There are some techniques used in data mining. Supervised learning is probably the most frequently used data mining technique in practice. Supervised learning is a form of classification in which a category or classifier function is learnt from data that has previously been labelled with similar predefined classes or categories. That classifier is then applied to place other, new but similar data, into those classes. Because the existing classification supervises the process, it is known as supervised learning.

Database methods can be applied that combine supervised and unsupervised learning, a process known as partially supervised learning. In addition, other techniques, such as association rules and data cubes are used. More recently, advanced methods that require considerable mathematical sophistication have been developed to help approach the challenges of data mining. One of the more useful, complex, and interesting forms of data mining is called opinion mining, which we describe in our next section.

7.1.3 Opinion Mining

Opinion mining works with the large amounts of naturally occurring or 'unstructured' text present on the web. Usually, opinion mining operates only on the text of user-generated content or user-generated media, because the processing of images, video, music graphics, and sound files is still far too complex for our current computational algorithms to handle.

Opinion mining is useful because it attempts to measure online word of mouth. However, it is still technically very challenging because it needs to use natural language processing (often abbreviated as NLP), a type of information processing that recognises the information in naturally occurring language. In software functions, NLP programs must match actual language with predefined categories of sentiment. For example, 'excellent' would be coded as a stronger sentiment than 'great' and 'great' would be coded as a stronger sentiment than 'good'. Ultimately, it is the goal of NLP to have software 'understand' the meaning of phrases such as 'ridiculously outrageously awesome' by being able to recognise as much of its context as possible and to classify it correctly and automatically.

In practice, however, the task is extremely difficult given the vast number of permutations and conventions in human language and expression. For example, while a human being will almost instantly understand irony and sarcasm, these modes of representation are very likely to confuse software programs. Although computers make excellent chess players and calculators at our current stage of technological development, human beings are still far more sophisticated information processors than even the smartest computers when it comes to understanding the incredible complexity of natural written, spoken, or represented language.

There are three key elements to opinion mining –

- First is sentiment classification. Like text classification, the data mining system or algorithm needs to determine whether a particular text expresses either a positive or a negative sentiment.
- The second is feature-based opinion mining. At this level, the system would move to the level of sentences or statements to discover details about which attributes or aspects of a product, service, or candidate people were communicating about. For example, in the comment 'the screen of this tablet computer is too small' the sentiment is negative and the comment concerns screen size.
- Next is comparative mining, in which one object is compared against one or more similar objects. For example, a comparison is explicit in the sentence 'The brightness of the HP tablet screen is much better than the brightness of the iPad'.

Finally, the strength or passion of particular opinions can be assessed. In this case, the recognition of adjectives and adverbs can be extremely important to the appropriate processing of the comment or review. For example, 'The form factor of the new Samsung tablet is ridiculously outrageously awesome!!!' Recognising the meaning of this sort of statement will require natural language processing.

There are many different ways to approach data mining, and interested researchers should not be deterred by believing that it is overly difficult. In fact, they use a form of data mining software whenever we perform a search on Google. From a universe of possibilities, we narrow our choices using search terms and keywords, finally settling on a particular site or set of sites to inform our search.

There are many basic programs available to help researchers with this type of search. Companies such as NetBase with its Consumer Base engines, Visible Technologies, Sysomos, and many others, produce web mining and classification software products that are user-friendly and that easily produce customisable, attractive research reports. These types of search engines will crawl the web and mine any areas that they can.

The mineable areas usually include pages on the World Wide Web, such as different product or company forums, different blogs, archives of Twitter feeds, and other locations. Chat rooms and social networking sites,

such as Facebook are generally not mineable. With some of these programs, opinion scores can be rated for influence.

For example, opinions appearing on top-rated and highly visited blogs might be weighted in indices more heavily than opinions appearing on new blogs with few followers. Opinions also have a temporal dimension that can reveal trends over time. So, for example, we could chart the opinions towards President Obama from his campaign years through various events in his presidency and through his re-election campaign.

Opinions can also be presented in a variety of different visual forms and using a variety of different infographics. Although pie charts and bar charts are still very popular for presenting the features or attributes found in feature-based mining, there are many creative ways to visually present this data, such as scatter diagrams, adjustable diagrams, and word clouds.

Finally, one important consideration in opinion mining is how the program will treat spam and other noisy aspects of the naturalistic opinion data available on the internet. Companies often post press releases that praise their own products online. Newspaper articles and blog articles can be sponsored, posted and reposted online. There are numerous companies and public relations agencies that pay people to post positive reviews of their products and services online, and sometimes to produce and post negative reviews of competitors' products and services. Often these conflicts of interest are unreported or invisible.

In addition, high-quality original content is valuable and rare on the internet. Many posters will simply cut and paste, or point with hyperlinks, to other reviews or content. Thus, the amount of duplicate information about products and services can be very considerable. Because of such tendencies in posting, high-quality spam detection in software programs is a very important filter before data mining is initiated. This sort of detection will look for content similarity, detect rating and content outliers, look for unusual reviewer/poster behaviour, and detect suspicious spikes in ratings. In these cases, the algorithm will attempt to flag, minimize and often automatically eliminate the influence of suspicious or repeat opinion data. The benefits of such information can be quite powerful to brand managers. Even this method of data collection improves the performance of the organization.

7.2 NETNOGRAPHY

Both data mining and top-down social network analysis look at qualitative data on the internet as a type of content that must be contextualized or processed in different ways in order to reveal more general patterns of common topics, structures or influence. However, there is another complementary way to view this qualitative data, called netnography.

In netnography, researchers view qualitative online data as indicative of cultures or communities. Using techniques prevalent in anthropology and sociology, marketing and consumer researchers can study social media and online communities as cultural phenomena.

Social media can be defined as media for communication that use accessible and scalable formats and that are generally open to large groups, or even the entire public. If we consider these media to be truly social then social methods that study the interactions between people as a cultural phenomenon are entirely appropriate and can reveal important aspects of online behaviour, such as the values, meanings, language, rituals and other symbol systems that consumers create when they share and create culture online.

Researchers have been applying netnographic methods to online communities and cultures for quite some time now. In 1999, Sterne (1999, p. 269) wrote that 'Online analyses of Internet culture use a hybrid approach – often combining in various degrees, ethnography, autobiography, and textual analysis.' Hine (2000, p. 10) defined 'virtual ethnography' as 'an ethnography of, in, and through the Internet [that] can be conceived of as an adaptive and wholeheartedly partial approach which draws on connection rather than location in defining its object.'

Without offering particular guidelines, Fernback (1999, p. 216) mentioned that 'ethnographers working in cyberspace must be careful to attempt to a measure of reflexivity, to separate oneself from the subjects being studied; they must develop a sense about the truthfulness and honest of their informants, just as ethnographers of the nonvirtual must; and they must use a theoretically informed framework for their research, just as ethnographers have traditionally done'.

For Miller and Slater (2000, p. 21), their ethnography of internet use in Trinidad involved a range of in-person and computer-mediated participant observation and was not limited to a 'purely textual analysis' of 'online "community" and relationships.' Like these past forms and demonstrations of online ethnography, netnography is a form of ethnographic research adapted to the unique contingencies of various types of computer-mediated social interactions. However, using netnography means adhering to a more specific set of guidelines than has been described in these past studies.

A netnography is not simply an extension of a 'purely textual analysis', a 'wholeheartedly partial approach', an idiosyncratic 'hybrid', or a loosely specified set of senses and social concepts to which to attend. Instead, netnography offers a common language, a common understanding and a common set of standards for engaging in research practice. This commonality sets the stage for research that is consistent and rigorous.

Kozinets (2010) identifies four critical differences between the two. The first important difference is alteration - which simply means that the nature of the interaction is altered both constrained and liberated by the specific nature and rules of the technological medium in which it is

carried. As an example, consider the learning of additional codes and norms, such as 'netiquette'- online and mobile rules of appropriate behaviour, abbreviations such as dot-com and dot- mobi, emoticons, keystroke sets, and other skills and knowledge that are important to transferring and presenting different kinds of social knowledge.

There are cultural differences in these conventions as seen, for example, in the different emoticons used in Japan and North America. For example, most Americans are quite familiar with the simple two-character, 90-degree counterclockwise rotated emoticon for a wink which looks like this ;) . However, perhaps because of their complex kanji character set, the Japanese (and Chinese as well) make much more complex emoticons. An extremely simple wink emoticon for a Japanese person is the following five-character complete facial portrait: (^_~). Over time, linguistic and technical conventions, such as these become naturalized, as a type of language which in itself expresses a new manifestation of the culture (e.g., Japanese cyberculture versus American cyberculture). Because the technological interface alters the already various human interaction experiences further, face-to-face ethnographic procedures do not always make sense when applied to understanding online cultural worlds.

The next difference is anonymity - which was particularly relevant in the early years of online interactions, but maybe less so in a world where Facebook identities are also often public identities. However, the option of anonymity and pseudonymity is still meaningful today and still alters the way that social interactions happen online. As evidence, consider Google +'s recent about faces which they first banned, and then in early 2012 reneged and finally allowed pseudonyms. Anonymity has vexed marketing researchers for years. Many marketers would like to be able to link online consumers with real-world demographics for more precise targeting and understanding. However, anonymity can also be liberating to consumers in a way that is useful and informative. Freed from the inhibitions that accountability creates, they more openly express their opinions, identities, and creativity. This can be valuable not only to participants themselves and their communities, but also to researchers and marketers.

The next difference is the wide accessibility of many online forums that are open to participation by anyone or anyone who cares to register using their email address. In general, although there are notable exceptions, online social interactions tend to manifest an ethics of general democracy and inclusiveness. Gaining acceptance and status in social media communities can still be knowledge and norm-dependent. But social media and the internet, as communications forums, are far more mass and far more global than anything in human history that preceded them. They comprise a hybrid form of public and private communications that is both incredibly broad (e.g., a blog comment) and incredibly narrow (e.g., an e-mail or direct message on Facebook or Twitter). The resulting exhibitionism and voyeurism (Observation) are unique to the medium and require the adaptation of face-to-face ethnographic techniques.

Finally, there is nothing in the physical world analogous to the automatic archiving of conversations and data that we see in the world of social media. Communications take place in a digital format that is instantly stored, and which can be archived indefinitely. Conversation threads can develop asynchronously and last for years. Social interaction automatically becomes an artefact. This is usually done by the applications themselves, but in the case of Twitter, the US Library of Congress has been archiving all Tweets since March 2006. With 250 million Tweets per day, this is obviously a lot of data, even with the application's 140-character limit. For ethnography of content on such media, this means that the field notes must take on a different meaning. The way that data is collected, and the amounts of data to collect, radically shift the nature of research. As we consider this alteration in data collection, along with the other three differences, it is useful to turn to a general discussion of the procedures for data collection in netnography, as well as to an overview of general netnographic research techniques themselves.

7.2.1 Data Collection in Netnography

Netnography is ethnography in the social spaces of online environments. It involves taking an active approach to online research that seeks to maintain and analyze the cultural qualities of online interaction. Netnography is about researcher immersion in the full cultural complexity of online social worlds. Therefore, data collection in netnography means learning deeply from, and likely communicating meaningfully with, members of an online culture or community manifesting itself through social media. That communication entails an active and relevant involvement, engagement, and connection with a community and its members.

In netnography as in ethnography, data collection happens alongside some basic data analysis. Even if the data is of archival interactions, the netnographer should be noting and interpreting the way that meanings, contexts, and people are influencing one another in a way relevant to the research questions under consideration. Certainly, the act of participating changes the nature of data collection and analysis, and differentiates netnographic techniques from other techniques such as content analysis or social network analysis. Content analysts might move through social media archives (more likely their algorithms would). But they would not be reading them for the kind of meaning-rich information that would help them understand the culture membership. Social network analysis might describe patterns of influence between different community members, but it would also fail to build familiarity with the sets of meanings and values of the group being studied.

Netnographic participation drives netnographic data collection. Participation does not necessarily mean reaching out to members with posts which ask them questions as if the netnographer were conducting an interview with the entire community, or even with certain select other members. Although participation can sometimes be visible to other community members, and preferably it will contribute to their communal

interests and well-being, it can also involve other types of actions. The key guideline is that the netnographer should participate in the community at a level that is appropriate for a member.

There are many different kinds of members of communities, and for some, it may be appropriate merely to observe the community, to read messages, to follow links and to be engaged in this way on a daily or more frequent basis. For some communities, engagement might require much more commitment in terms of disclosure and content production, for example being on a weight loss community and posting pictures of oneself in a bathing suit, or being a member of a design community and trying one's hand at designing new dresses and posting them for member comments.

Langer and Beckman (2005) have questioned the importance and value of researcher participation in netnography, asserting that 'covert studies' of online communities are sometimes desirable. Often, researchers have asserted in their methods sections that they are performing 'observational' or 'passive' netnographies (e.g., Beaven and Laws 2007; Brown et al. 2003; Brownlie and Hewer 2007; Füller et al. 2006; Maulana and Eckhardt 2007). When combined with sophisticated qualitative data analysis software approaches, this observational approach to netnography might even come close to content mining and content analysis.

However, the participative role of the cultural researcher is often vital to the experience of learning embedded cultural understandings. As anthropology teaches us, direct experience is the best and perhaps only way to gain a profound understanding of cultural membership. Without it, a netnographer is blind to the cultural meanings of a social media site or community she does not fully understand. Without communal contact, a netnographer has no one to bounce her interpretation off of, and to validate, dispute, or expand upon her many cultural interpretations. The result can often be a retreat into purely descriptive accounts, rather than the profound conceptual understanding for which quality anthropology is renowned (see Boellstorff 2008 for a good anthropological netnography). Like ethnography, netnography is based on the twin and intertwining methodological pillars of participation and observation. Netnographers focus on particular communities, and then on particular messages or message threads. These close readings can be revelatory of new insights as well as more general insights (see, e.g., Kozinets, 2006b for deep interpretation of a single message posting).

- **Elicited data**

It is data that the researcher co-creates alongside social media community members. This is data produced through social media communications, and thus through relevant personal and communal interaction. Elicited data includes researcher postings and comments. It can also include Twitter feeds, Facebook status updates and messages, Skype conversations, e-mail, chat, or instant messaging interviews. Elicited data is a co-production of the researcher and the community. Because this data has the researcher's influence built into it, it is analyzed somewhat

differently from data that does not have this stamp of influence, a sorting of data not usually possible in collected ethnographic data. However, this is certainly not 'contaminated' or impure data by any means. Elicited data can be much more focused and much more valuable in the service of answering crucial research questions than other data.

- **Field Note data**

It comes from the personal and research-related descriptive and reflective field notes that the researcher has created. Netnographers, like ethnographers, should be writing their reflections and observations of the field site and culture members throughout their fieldwork. This writing process should capture the netnographer's impressions and observations of the social media community itself, its members and memberships, its practices, the members' social interactions and meanings, the researcher's own participation and sense of membership, and much more. During analysis, these observations and impressions can be extremely valuable sources of insight that can help reveal unique and important contexts as well as the cultural processes at work in general and within particular social media communities.

7.2.2 Basic Principles of Online Data Capture and Collection

Netnographers have a choice between manual data capture and analysis and automated data capture and analysis. Both can be used very effectively. Manual data collection and analysis involve saving computer files on a hard drive and coding either in document programs, such as Word or in Spreadsheets or database programs. These types of capture and analysis make sense when the data is kept to a smaller size, perhaps 500 to 1,000 pages of data. For many projects, and projects with a tractable focus, manual data coding can be perfectly sufficient.

Automated data collection, which uses qualitative data analysis software programs to assist with data coding and organization, can be used to handle larger and less focused projects with greater amounts of data. When the topic of study is an entire large, active social media community, or when the work seeks to explore a major topic or is exploratory and insight-driven in nature, this is usually the best technique to use, and the researcher should be prepared and able to handle the large resulting amount of data and the consequent challenges of organizing and analyzing it.

In terms of actually capturing and storing data, there are two basic ways to capture online data, which we can term saving and capturing. The first is to save the file as a computer-readable file. The second is to capture it as a visual image of the computer screen. Saving is more appropriate for highly textual messages where the researcher considers that other elements of the context, such as page design, visuals, and other elements are unimportant to the analysis and research question(s). Capturing is more appropriate when the reverse is true, that is, that context, visual elements, and perhaps other elements (e.g., Audiovisual links) are important to the research question and eventual analysis.

In many cases, the captures of online screen grabs can be scanned and the text recognised by OCR programs, and thus capture can be translated back into computer-readable files. Thus, the default decision should probably be, when in doubt about the richness of the data, to capture the

image rather than to reduce it by saving the file. It is also noteworthy that content mining and social network analysis deal almost exclusively with textual and relational data. They cannot accommodate the cultural and contextual richness of consumers' sound, image, and audiovisual representations. In this respect as well as others, netnography deals with data that is 'richer' in a linguistic, symbol-driven cultural sense, and holds much greater potential to produce a more complex and contextualized understanding of online social worlds.

7.2.3 Getting Ready for Netnographic Data Collection

Archiving and accessibility are two of the major differences between online fieldwork and traditional face-to-face ethnography that create a very different research environment when it comes to data collection. These two factors change the way that the researcher locates a relevant site, community, or cultural space. Whereas a traditional ethnographer might travel great distances by air, land, or sea in order to study a culture in a distant land, a netnographer might simply need to sit down at her laptop and open a good search engine.

For instance, the Google engine can identify many message topic threads across many different media of interest, including blogs and public the web-page forums. And twitter.com/search is a search engine that covers posted Twitter feeds. There is also a range of different engines that can search different parts of Facebook and LinkedIn. In addition, many commercial data mining and marketing research services will include access to sophisticated search engines that combine many different types of community information, often, allowing the researcher to search within different social media categories (such as blogs, forums, social networking sites, and so on).

One of the main issues surrounding data collection in netnography and, indeed, data collection across the internet in general, concerns where to focus. The enormous opportunity for discovery is why it is crucial for qualitative researchers to begin their work with a general research question and then to adapt and refine that question in response to data collection opportunities and initial analysis results.

For example, a consumer researcher might be interested in studying the popular consumption of fine art. An appropriate initial research question for such an investigation might be –

- 'What are the main discussions surrounding the popular consumption of fine art?
- What are the main topics?
- Who appears to be discussing them?
- In what context do these discussions occur?'

From there, and particularly during data analysis, the research question might develop to focus more specifically on theoretical matters such as European art versus Asian art, the negotiation of aesthetics, and the use of social media to promote consumption-related status distinctions.

Often, marketing and consumer researchers will simply be interested in studying particular online sites. This is similar to an ethnographer who studies in a particular geographical region or a sociologist who is interested in learning about a particular subculture that frequents a certain neighbourhood of a large city. For marketing academics, brand communities pose particularly interesting contexts.

For example, Muñiz and Schau (2005) were interested in the online communities devoted to the defunct PDA, the Apple Newton. From their study of these communities, they offered a rich theory about the myth-driven and quasi-religious relationship between consumer communities and brands. Brand managers are often interested in understanding the activities and responses of participants in communities and sites that feature or relate to their own brands, consumer lifestyle groupings, or product categories. Netnographic studies of these sites can be useful for benchmarking best practices as well as auditing existing offerings.

- **Collecting Data and Choosing Data Analysis Software**

There are no general rules about when to start keeping field notes, but we would recommend getting into a habit of jotting notes about initial sites visited as you begin your investigation. These jottings can be developed into more detailed field notes as your netnography develops. It is useful to begin these practices early, as the insights you will gain as you first enter the social media fieldsite can be enormously valuable when it comes time for data analysis. These initial insights, which occur as you learn about the cultural systems of a new site, are fleeting, and they are crucial to capture immediately.

From the earliest times in your research investigation, you should also be preparing yourself to collect data. Likewise, Richards (2005) suggests that researchers should choose a qualitative data analysis package and learn about it even before collecting data. The time to learn about your software package is not when you are saturated in your social media site and all of its rich data, but when you can calmly consider how it works and how it can help you. If you are going to be employing a qualitative data analysis software package, it can be useful to save your initial field notes using the software. You can use these software inputs to keep yourself organized in managing your research design, your readings, your field data, your field notes and observations, your initial and more advanced analysis, correspondences, screenshots, downloaded files including video and audio, e-mails, and all of your conclusions and reports.

By having all of this information organized and in one place (as well as backup), you will make your life much easier. Once you begin your formal entry into the field site, your research work will already be in progress, and places will have already been established for storing that information.

Just as is the case with in-person ethnography, it is important to get into the habit of systematically reflecting on your encounters with culture members after these events occur. With a good software package in place, you will already be organizing, commenting upon, and perhaps even entering some rudimentary codes in your data.

• **Online Interviews**

In netnography, interviews are frequently involved as a way to deepen the understanding of the lived experience of culture members, to learn about meanings and language, and to build rapport with research participants. Interviews are often described as a special kind of face-to-face oral communication. Online interviews are similar in principle to interviews that are conducted face-to-face, but the reality of their conduct is quite different. Interviews exist as a set of questions and answers between two or more people who agree that there are generally two roles: that of a questioner and that of an answerer. The interview, also sometimes called an 'online' or 'cyber-' interview, has been a staple of cultural studies of online worlds from the beginning in the 1990s (Cherny 1999). Although purely observational netnographies can be conducted, interviews are useful when the understanding sought includes consumers' own self-reflections, cultural categories, or expressed narratives.

Although some online researchers report mixed or unsatisfying results from online interviews, and some recommend supplementing online fieldwork with phone interviews (e.g., Bruckman 2006), online interviews still can have a part to play in many online research studies. We do find that synchronous, text-based, chat interviews tend to offer a very thin and often rather rushed and superficial interaction.

However, this experience should not preclude the use of other media for interviews, such as e-mail. Indeed, in the age of Skype, a Skype conversation with online audio and visual connections can be quite rich and valuable (see Kivits 2005). Online interviews can also be recorded audio-visually. Is an interview conducted on Skype using Facetime on your iPad an 'online interview'? Technically, it is. So even the meaning of an 'online interview' - e.g., that it is non-visual and does not include body language is in flux in the age of rapidly increasing technological sophistication.

Traditionally, however, online interviews have been text-based, and this has led to some important limitations. In a chat room, who is the actual interview participant (see Turkle 1995)? How can they be understood and socially situated? This lack of individual identifiers has been frustrating to consumer and marketing researchers in the past. In addition, the lack of access to facial expressions and body language has hindered the expression of the full cultural and social nature of the interview. It has made that social information more difficult to interpret.

However, as with the notion of adaptation mentioned above, conducting an interview through a computer (or tablet, or mobile device) means that the structure and content of interview communications are going to be

modified by the medium used. For some netnographies, in situ, conversations or a quick exchange of social information in the form of DM (direct message) or e-mail might suffice to inform your research question. For other purposes, group interviews similar to online focus groups can be employed. For others, depth interviews with single, influential social media participants might be the most useful technique. The type of data that is required should determine the optimal type of interview, and those data needs should in turn be directly informed by the purpose of the research.

In a netnography, we are usually seeking cultural understandings of the life of a social group and its members. For this purpose, depth interviewing is the best technique we can employ. Depth, or in-depth interviews are intensive interviews with smaller numbers of people that allow a more extensive exploration of their perspective and viewpoints. Depth interviews are time intensive, labour intensive, and require considerable interviewer skills. They place the most serious demands upon interview participants as well, because they ask for and allow a deeper disclosure of more sensitive, personal matters.

As Grant McCracken (1989) usefully describes the grand tour questions in his 'long interview' method, the depth interview begins with an understanding of the social situation of the culture member - for example, their age, gender, nationality, family background, schools, ethnic orientation, sexual orientation, and so on and how it influences their lives. In a netnography, this might be connected to the way that they use social media.

For instance, depth interview findings might lead us to theorize that someone who is the eldest sibling, but who was always seen as a creative outsider among their peers and at school, tends to participate more heavily and seek leadership status in social media brand communities, such as blogs. Through using the depth interviews and the rich personal data they provide, we can understand how brands, communities, and social media intersect with the various contexts and roles that create the human social experience, both in the physical world and online. In the next section, we will discuss depth interviews in detail.

7.3 FOCUS GROUP AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

7.3.1 Focus Group

Paradoxically, while focus groups remain the most commonly used qualitative method in business, they are the least commonly used qualitative method in academics. The reasons for the popularity of focus groups in industry include being relatively quick, easy, and inexpensive to conduct as well as able to give managers (often behind one-way glass mirrors) a first-hand glimpse of their potential customers (Stewart 2010).

The main reasons for the lack of popularity of focus groups in academic research are that they are complicated by group dynamics, they generally lack the depth of one-on-one interviews, and some people may be more reluctant to express their feelings and behaviour in a group setting, even though the focus group is generally composed of strangers.

Group dynamics include dominant or persuasive focus group members leading the group in a type of groupthink. There may also be a tendency to take more risky stances in a focus group due to the 'risky shift' that can arise due to the diffusion of responsibility in a group (Catterall and Maclaren 2006). But in a well-conducted focus group, group dynamics can also result in a free-form sharing of opinions if the moderator is able to nurture a creative environment in which participants are accepting, there are no wrong answers, and diversity of opinion is healthy.

• **Recruiting Focus Group Members**

General advice for the number of participants for a focus group is 6-12 people, with 8 being a common target (Catterall and Maclaren 2006; Stewart et al. 2007). At least, this is the advice commonly given based on the assumption that the group is convened in a single location for a face-to-face interview. When it is to be a virtual focus group conducted online, it is best to use a smaller number of people with 5 being a good maximum (Kozinets 2010a).

For face-to-face focus groups, participants should generally be relatively homogeneous with respect to age, gender, and degree of expertise in the area of interest (e.g., cooking, car repair, gardening). Age and gender homogeneity are less important in virtual focus groups unless a synchronous visual form of communication is used.

However, asynchronous virtual focus groups, like those conducted on closed membership forums, offer greater conversational cases (if less group spontaneity) for participants (Fox et al. 2007; Kozinets 2010a). Although focus groups for any given project are generally too few and too small to worry about representativeness, having appropriate heterogeneity across groups can give some feel for differences in key consumer variables like income and education.

Market research firms offer focus group recruitment to client specifications, but there is sometimes a danger of getting 'professional' focus group participants. They are often motivated by money (common for focus groups where participants must come to a central location) and participate in many focus groups such that over time they become atypical consumers. Generally speaking, focus groups work on the principle of anonymity, so that strangers are better recruits than friends (Catterall and Maclaren 2006).

An exception might be when naturally occurring interactions are of interest, such as when studying the group phenomena involved in everyday texting and social media. Where participants are difficult to recruit, such as doctors or CEOs, greater incentives as well as creativity

may be required. For example, Stewart et al. (2007) describe a research project in which CEOs were invited to an all-expense paid weekend cruise with their partners in order to gain access to a floating focus group with these executives.

- **Preparing for and Running Focus Group**

While many of the techniques for individual interviews like preparing a protocol, funnelling, probes, and use of the projective techniques also apply to focus groups, there are some additional considerations. Participants should be given name tents or name tags with their first names on them so that they can begin to address each other rather than the interviewer over the course of a typically one- to two-hour group interview. They are often provided with water, soft drinks, and light refreshments. Sometimes stimuli like products, packaging, or advertising are used during the interview to direct attention to a focus of the researcher's interest. The moderator also needs to provide a safe comfortable environment in which focus group members feel free to express themselves.

When some participants start to dominate, the moderator may want to stimulate others by calling on the shy or asking what others think. When groupthink seems to be emerging, the moderator might specifically ask for other opinions or points of view. Projective methods can also be useful in getting more diverse opinions. Protocols should be pretested as well to see what works best. Sometimes the group dynamics can be of interest to observing processes of conflict resolution, consensus building, and coalition formation (Gaskell 2000; Mariampolski 2006).

- **When To Use and Not Use Focus Groups**

As Catterall and Maclaren (2006) emphasize, focus groups are especially good when the researcher wants to examine shared meanings and shared terminology. For example, if the researcher wanted to gain some familiarity with hip-hop culture in the Netherlands or uses of summer roller skiing among those who compete in cross-country ski races in the winter, before attempting participant observation focus groups with appropriately screened participants might provide a good introduction.

They may also work well for taste and smell tests or reactions to package design, although group dynamics can still be a concern. As noted above, focus groups are also a good way to investigate certain types of group dynamics (Gaskell 2000), such as how males versus females (or mixed-gender groups) reach a consensus. At the same time, there are many topics where focus groups are not the best approach, including those in which the intent is to elicit long narratives and those in which the intent is to gauge attitudes (Barbour 2008).

In general, focus groups are probably best used for exploratory research. It is important to bear in mind that, despite the moderator's best efforts, they may suffer from groupthink and are not representative in any case. They may serve to tease out answers to concrete managerial issues like a change

in customer service policies, but it is extremely rare that an academic journal will accept a paper based solely on focus group data.

- **Analysis of Focus Group Data**

Often, the moderator of a focus group is asked, especially in managerial studies, to present a report on the focus group not long after it has taken place. But, it is important not to rush to judgment based on recollections and re-examining audio or video recordings of focus groups. Like depth interviews, these group interviews should be carefully transcribed. Given the group dynamics at play, it is even more important to capture non-verbal information in these transcripts. A further difficulty with focus groups is attributing who said what. Even if the moderator manages to get the participants not to talk over one another, an audio recording is often difficult to transcribe with proper attributions.

Video recordings are better in this regard, but if an oval table has been used (as is often recommended), a two-camera setup is needed to capture conversations on both sides of the table. Boundary area microphones can also ensure good recording of voices all around the table. Once transcripts have been made, analysis can proceed with the sorts of coding and data reduction.

(Belk 1985) used sentence fragments including the following in validating a measure of materialism:

Christmas is a time when ...

Owning a house with a yard ...

The one thing that would make me happiest at this point in my life...

Results were then categorized as materialistic or non-materialistic and instances of each type of association were compared to scores on materialism scales.

Whereas word association and sentence completion elicit only a few words, cartoon tests present a simple drawing of a situation and ask participants to describe what they think is going on. These stories may then reveal assumptions and attitudes.

In symbol matching, we can get a quick visual metaphor for a person, brand, company, or other object of interest. For instance, we might present an array of cups from dainty and delicate tea cups to hardy large mugs and ask which one represented a company better.

Auto Driving or visual elicitation is the depth interviewing method that uses visual stimuli to derive interpretations and stories from the informant (Heisley and Levy 1991; Sayre 2006). Often, these stimuli are photos or videos depicting the informant in an earlier context. For example, if you were observing someone bargaining at a swap meet, it would be too disruptive to stop their negotiations to ask them questions about it.

But by photographing or video-recording the behaviour, these pictures and videos can be shown to the informant after the negotiation has been completed in order to find out what was really going on in their minds as they insisted that a certain price point was their limit. The method also works using people's own family photos as stimuli (Chalfen 1987). With smartphones the researcher could even call an informant, ask them to use their phone to photograph their setting at that moment, and have them email the photo to the researcher for auto-driving then or later. It is also possible to use historic photos to prompt memories from informants and compare changes that have taken place.

7.3.2 Depth Interview

The depth interview seeks an in-depth understanding of a topic that the research informant is able to speak about. It is usually about something that is important in the informant's life and that he or she has a good deal of information and opinions about that they can be encouraged to reveal. Although there are other types of interviews, including casual interviews, group interviews, and self-interviews, the depth interview is a formal and often lengthy interview (normally lasting an hour or longer).

Rather than a superficial excavation of the interviewee's knowledge about a topic or behaviour, it tries to go more deeply into the subject as the interview proceeds. It requires a certain amount of intimacy and a fair amount of skill to accomplish this. As with other qualitative research methods, the key is practice, practice, practice. We assume in what follows that the researcher is also the interviewer. This is almost always best.

But in instances, where you are hiring and training interviewers, it is even more important to do these exercises in order to sensitize yourself to the problems the interviewers will face. It is not always possible to conduct interviews yourself. It is also best that you speak the language in which the interviews are being conducted. It is important to establish from the outset that there are no right or wrong answers and that you are interested in their personal views. In securing informed consent, they should be told that they can ask questions, stop the interview, take a break, or say things off the record at any point.

- **Interview as Conversation**

A depth interview is a special type of conversation. Like other conversations, it involves turn-taking, an interest in what the other person has to say, and a coherent flow of topics. It differs from survey research which has fixed questions, in a fixed order, with little concern with the flow or logic of the topics. Even if the questionnaire in survey research seeks open-ended answers, it can jump between questions about cars, houses, and possessions with little concern for logic or continuity. Moreover, survey research interviewers are generally not allowed to deviate from the fixed script of questions using specific terms and a specific order of items. We would not tolerate such rigidity in an ordinary conversation and we should not tolerate it in depth interviews.

Another way in which depth interview differs from survey research using a questionnaire is that while a survey uses a questionnaire that is just a list of questions – a depth interview instead uses a protocol (although see McCracken 1988 for an argument for using fixed questions). A protocol is a list of topics instead of a list of questions. The interviewer generally memorizes the protocol, but has no predetermined specific questions or question ordering. This is relatively easy to do in the first few interviews, but care is needed subsequently not to fall into a routine that begins to become more like repeating an invisible questionnaire. You would not have conversations with different friends following the same sequence of questions with each one. Nor should you do this with different interviewees.

But although a depth interview is like a conversation, it is also quite different from an everyday conversation in several important ways. Some of these are obvious: the interviewer and the interviewee are likely to be strangers; the interview is likely recorded in some way, and the interviewee agrees orally or with a written form to allow this. At the start of the interview, the interviewer describes what the topic will be, what is expected of the interviewee, and how long the interview is expected to last. Other differences are a bit more subtle.

For example, although there is turn-taking, the interviewer is clearly in charge and directing the conversation. The person being interviewed is expected to disclose information about themselves and their family or organization, while the interviewer is generally not expected to do so. Instead, the interviewer's turn in the conversation is filled with a request, a question, a probe, or a simple indication that they understand. Sometimes they may introduce audio-visual materials for the interviewee to respond to or exercises for them to complete.

For instance, Russ and Rosa Llamas are conducting a study of the meaning and interpretation of smiles in different cultures. During ethnographic research, there will likely be an array of different types of interviews from casual informal conversations hardly justifying the term interview to full-on in depth interviews that are pre-arranged and recorded.

There may also be follow-ups, preliminary interviews, multiple-part interviews on different days, member checks when initial reports are checked with informants for accuracy of descriptive information, and so forth. These different interview types vary widely in their depth, specificity, and detail. The interview might also be about the person's business, organization, or other professional role rather than their personal life. Sometimes a group interview or pair interview (e.g., couple, parent-child) is appropriate, but most often depth interviews will be one-on-one interviewer/interviewee.

Another important way in which a depth interview differs from an ordinary conversation is that the researcher directs the conversation in some ways that might seem rude or inappropriate in a normal conversation. The interview generally begins with a grand tour of the

background of the person being interviewed and non-threatening general topics. It might begin by asking to describe their background starting with their childhood. These may be 'throw-away' topics, but they can also provide useful context for understanding more about the person that you may want to refer back to during the interview. For example, if they tell you that their parents were divorced when they were 10 years old this can help to frame several topics such as childhood experiences, a family situation when growing up, and income of their family of origin, etc.

After some preliminary 'Grand Tour' questions, if there is sufficient rapport with the informant, the interviewer may ask the person to 'Tell me about (your vacation, your involvement with Mini-Coopers, your horses, or whatever the general topic of interest is)'. It is better not to interrupt the flow of their answer and to simply remember to come back later to the topic.

So in general, use probes judiciously and strategically to elicit elaboration without interrupting the flow of an answer that is going well on its own. Probing is perhaps the most critical element in getting depth in depth interviews. Unpractised interviewers are often too uncomfortable with silence and too quick to move on to the next topic. Doing this reinforces superficial answers and fails to let all of what an informant has to say come out.

Circling back to topics of interest mentioned earlier in the interview also gives the researcher a chance to think about logically related topics that may or may not have already been covered. So the researcher might say 'So those are some of the Christmas gifts that you gave to your children in the past ...' As the researcher is saying this, he or she should also be thinking about what is missing (e.g., Christmas gifts that the informant received when he or she was a child, Christmas gifts to his or her children now, non-Christmas gifts to children in the past as for birthdays for example, every day giving to children in the past. when there was no special occasion).

Time, generation, and occasion are just a few of the pairings that the researcher might think about exploring. Others in this context might be extremes of emotions (happy, sad), idealism (idea, actual), family role (child, parent), and gift role (giver, recipient). So circling back not only seeks greater depth on topics mentioned too briefly, but also provides a chance to see what is missing in covering the substantive or emotional domain, try to circle back to earlier topics for greater depth and as a lead-in to missing areas of the discussion.

While going from general to specific, circling back, strategic probing, and logically linking from one topic to the next can give some structure to a depth interview as well as help assure deep and thick descriptions rather than superficial answers, the interviewer needs to keep the interview flowing and productive. Still, we do not know what we will discover. If we did, there would be no point in conducting a depth interview. This means that the interview needs to be flexible and willing to deviate away

from the interview protocol in order to explore emergent topics of interest and relevance.

Informing the informant about the general purpose of the research, we have specified a destination: this is where we want this interview to go. While keeping this destination in mind, we also need to be willing to take side trips that the informant wishes to take us on in answering our questions. In some cases, these side trips will stray too far from the destination and as an interviewer, you will need to guide the informant back to the main road.

But in other cases, the side road may turn out to be more interesting and informative than the main road that the interviewer was previously travelling. For example, suppose in the previous example of a study of gift-giving the person being interviewed starts talking about her Japanese heritage and how important wrapping is in Japanese culture. Even though the initial focus of the study was about the gifts themselves, you begin to realize that the wrapping and the rituals of gift-giving can also be considered to be a part of the gift that is being given.

In this case, the side road to talk about gift wrapping should be thoroughly explored in this and subsequent interviews. The side road has turned out to be as informative and helpful as the main road, maybe even more so. In other cases, the side road will turn out to be a dead end. This might be the case if the interviewee begins to tell long stories about the gift recipient. This is always a judgment call, and if you err, err on the side of going too far afield rather than sticking to the straight and narrow main road. Thus, be willing to explore tangential topics that the interviewee brings up, but use good judgment about when to guide the interview back on-topic.

7.4 SUMMARY

Qualitative data deriving from online and social media interaction are becoming increasingly important to the conduct of consumer and marketing research in the contemporary world. Although the collection and analysis of this data do not necessarily require radical adaptations or departures from extant qualitative research practices, we believe that these existing practices do require careful and systematic adaptation. In providing a broad overview with several important details, this unit has emphasized that taking techniques of content analysis, interviewing, and participant observation into the age of web mining, online interviews, and netnography is a process that is undergoing constant development and rapid evolution. New techniques and tools, and certainly new sites for data collection and research, are available for researchers. There are a variety of techniques and issues in depth interviews and the use of projective methods. The only way to really learn qualitative methods is to practice them. In short, these methods play a vital role in the study of research methods.

7.5 QUESTIONS

1. What is data mining?
2. Explain the basic principles of online data capture and collection.
3. Elaborate on collecting data and choosing data analysis software.
4. What is an online interview?

7.6 REFERENCES

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ADVANCES IN RESEARCH METHODS - II

Unit Structure :

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction: Cross-cultural Consumer Psychology
 - 8.1.1 What Is Culture?
- 8.2 Cultural Variation: Structural Issues
 - 8.2.1. Expanding The Set Of Cultural Dimensions
 - 8.2.2 The Horizontal/Vertical Distinction
- 8.3 Additional Dimensions
 - 8.3.1 Culture And The Self: Self-Regulatory Focus
 - 8.3.2 Culture And The Self: Making Risky Choices And Self-Regulation
 - 8.3.3 Culture And Consumer Persuasion
 - 8.3.4 Content Analysis: Cultural Differences In The Prevalence Of Appeals
 - 8.3.5 Cultural Differences In Judgment And Persuasion
- 8.4 Measurement And Methodology: Overview
 - 8.4.1 Constructing Equivalent Measures
- 8.5 Culture And Response Styles
 - 8.5.1 Extreme Response Style
- 8.6 Summary
- 8.7 Questions
- 8.8 References

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of culture.
- To understand cultural variation.
- To know the measurement and methodology.
- To know culture and response styles.

8.1 INTRODUCTION: CROSS-CULTURAL CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

In Consumer Psychology, culture plays a very important role. Every year, multinational companies spend billions of dollars in marketing their products around the world. As new global markets emerge and existing markets become increasingly segmented along ethnic or subcultural lines, the need to market effectively to consumers who have different cultural values has never been more acute. Thus, it is no surprise that in the last ten to 15 to 20 years, culture has rapidly emerged as a central focus of research in consumer psychology. In this unit, we will discuss the meaning of culture and how it influences consumer psychology.

8.1.1 What is Culture?

Culture is the root of a person's interests and behaviour. It is a crucial concept for the understanding of consumer behaviour because it is the lens through which people view marketing messages and products. Culture consists of shared elements that provide the standards for believing, perceiving, communicating, evaluating and acting among those who share a historical period, a language and a geographic location.

Regardless of how culture is studied, cultural differences have been shown to have significant effects on ad content, persuasive appeals, consumer decision-making processes, consumer motivation, and consumer response styles. In this unit, The content is organized around both the theoretical and the methodological implications of cultural differences in consumer judgments.

Individualism or collectivism, cultural construct, and independent or interdependent self-construal construct are given special attention because extensive research has demonstrated the implications of these variables for outcomes relevant to consumer behaviour. Because the study of culture requires the cross-cultural equivalence of measurement, we will address in detail specific measurement issues and culturally based response biases likely to be of interest to consumer psychologists.

8.2 CULTURAL VARIATION: STRUCTURAL ISSUES

The biggest difference lies in the degree to which a person defines himself in relation to others. The focus is whether the self is defined as independent and unique, or whether the self is seen essentially as part of a larger social network. This distinction has also been called the egocentric vs. sociocentric self (Shweder and Bourne, 1982) or the independent vs. interdependent self-builder (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

An independent self-construal defines an individual in terms of unique traits and characteristics that distinguish them from others, while an interdependent self-construal defines an individual in terms of social roles and relationships. National cultures that celebrate values of independence, such as the United States, Denmark, Canada and Germany, are generally

classified as individualistic societies where independent self-construction is common. In contrast, cultures that value the fulfillment of duties and obligations more than one's personal wants or desires, including most East Asian and Latin American countries such as China, Mexico, Korea, and Japan, are classified as collectivist societies with interdependent self-construction (Hofstede, 1901, Markus, 1901, 1991).

A very large body of research in psychology has demonstrated the many implications of individualism or collectivism and independent or interdependent self-construals for social perception and social behaviour (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989, 1995). Recent developments suggest that these two distinct culturally determined self-schemas may co-exist in memory, such that contextual factors can temporarily activate either the independent or the interdependent self-construal. It is relatively easy to activate distinct independent versus interdependent self-views.

Indeed, people in general, and especially bicultural people, can readily switch back and forth between these independent and interdependent cultural frames in response to their contexts (Fu, Chiu, Morris, & Young, 2006; Lau-Gesk, 2003). When activated, these situationally accessible self-views appear to alter social perception and consumer judgments in ways that are highly consistent with cross-cultural findings (e.g., Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999; Hong, Ip, Chiu, Morris, & Menon, 2001; Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000; Mandel, 2003; Torelli, 2006; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). For instance, Lau-Gesk (2003) found that independent (interdependent) self-construals were temporarily activated when bicultural consumers were exposed to individually focused (interpersonally focused) appeals.

In sum, the distinctions between IND and COL societies, and independent and interdependent self-construals, are crucial to the cross-cultural understanding of consumer behaviour. whereas the 1980s were labelled the decade of individualism or collectivism in cross-cultural psychology (Kagitcibasi, 1994), similar distinctions represent the dominant structural approach in cross-cultural consumer research in the 1990s and 2000s. The studies offer a wealth of evidence that these cultural classifications have fundamental implications for consumption-related outcomes.

8.2.1 Expanding the Set of Cultural Dimensions

The conceptualizations of IND and COL, and independence or interdependence, have historically been multidimensional and broad, summarizing a host of differences in the focus of attention, self-definitions, motivations, emotional connections to ingroups, as well as belief systems and behavioural patterns (M. H. Bond, 2002; Ho & Chiu, 1994; Hofstede, 1980; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985).

Nevertheless, recent studies have proposed useful refinements to the broader INDCOL or independent or interdependent cultural categories. For instance, Rhee, Uleman, and Lee (1996) distinguished between kin

and nonkin versions of IND and COL and showed that Asians and European Americans manifested distinct patterns of relations between kin and nonkin IND. Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, and Bechtold (2004) distinguished between institutional and ingroup collectivism, and showed that there can be substantial differences in the degree to which a society encourages institutional collective action versus interpersonal interdependence.

Gaines et al. (1997) distinguished between IND, COL, and familism (orientation toward the welfare of one's family), and showed that this delineation better captured the cultural orientations observed in racial minority respondents in the United States. IND, COL, and familism proved to be separate dimensions that differed in their ability to account for race or ethnicity differences in cultural values. Cross, Bacon, and Morris (2000) demonstrated that a more relational version of interdependence applies in Western compared to Eastern societies, and provided a scale for its measurement (see also Kemmelmeier & Oyserman, 2001).

Gabriel and Gardner (1999) examined this distinction in relational (dyadic) versus more group-oriented interdependence and reported gender differences indicating that women are more relational but less group-oriented than men in their patterns of interdependent judgments and behaviours.

In sum, the nature and meaning of IND and COL (or of independent and interdependent self-construals) appear to vary across cultural, institutional, gender, and ethnic lines. Although the breadth of the INDCOL constructs lends integrative strengths, further refinement of these categories holds the potential to enhance the prediction of consumer behaviour.

8.2.2 The Horizontal/Vertical Distinction

Within the INDCOL framework, Triandis and his colleagues have recently introduced a further distinction between societies that are horizontal (valuing equality) and those that are vertical (emphasizing hierarchy). The horizontal or vertical distinction emerges from the observation that American or British individualism differs from, say, Norwegian or Danish individualism in much the same way that Japanese or Korean collectivism differs from the collectivism of the Israeli kibbutz. Specifically, in vertical individualist societies (VI; e.g., U.S., Great Britain, France), people tend to be concerned with improving their individual status and distinguishing themselves from others via competition.

In contrast, in horizontal individualist societies (HI; e.g., Sweden, Norway, Australia), where people prefer to view themselves as equal to others in status, the focus is on expressing one's uniqueness, capability, and self-reliance. In vertical collectivist societies (VC; e.g., Japan, Korea, India), people focus on fulfilling obligations to others, and on enhancing the status of their ingroups in competition with outgroups, even when that entails sacrificing their own personal goals.

In horizontal collectivist societies (HC; exemplified historically by the Israeli kibbutz), the focus is on sociability, benevolence, and interdependence with others (Erez & Earley, 1987). When such distinctions are taken into account, however, it becomes apparent that the societies chosen to represent IND and COL cultural syndromes in consumer research have almost exclusively been vertically oriented. Specifically, the modal comparisons are between the United States (VI) and any of several Pacific Rim countries (VC). It may be argued, therefore, that much of what is known about consumer behaviour in individualistic and collectivistic societies reflects vertical forms of these syndromes and may not generalize, for example, comparisons between Sweden (HI) and Israel (HC) or other sets of horizontal cultures.

As an example, conformity in product choice, as examined by Kim and Markus (1999), may be a tendency specific to VC cultures, in which deference to authority and to ingroup wishes is stressed. Much lower levels of conformity may be observed in HC cultures, which emphasize sociability but not deference (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Thus, it may be inappropriate to describe differences in consumers' conformity between Korea (VC) and the United States (VI) solely to the role of IND/COL or independence/interdependence, because such conformity might not be prevalent in horizontal societies. That is, levels of product conformity in HC contexts might not exceed those in HI contexts.

Indeed, several recent studies examining the implications of this horizontal/vertical cultural distinction have provided evidence for its value as a predictor of new consumer psychology phenomena and as a basis for refining the understanding of known phenomena (Shavitt, Lalwani, Zhang, & Torelli, 2006). For instance, Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000) demonstrated that the tendency to favour products from one's own country over foreign products (a country-of-origin effect) emerged more strongly in Japan (a VC culture) than in the United States (a VI culture). This fits well with a conceptualization of collectivists as being oriented toward their ingroups. However, mediational analyses using individual consumers' self-rated cultural values indicated that only the vertical dimension of IND and COL accounted for the country-of-origin effects in Japan.

In other words, the collectivistic tendency to favour one's own country's products appeared to be driven by cultural values that stress hierarchy, competition, and deference to ingroup wishes, not by values that stress interdependence more generally. In line with this, research suggests that advertising messages with themes that emphasize status, hierarchy, prestige and distinction may be more prevalent and persuasive in vertical cultural contexts (Shavitt, Lalwani et al., 2006). Such advertisements also appear to be generally more persuasive for those with a vertical cultural orientation and may be inappropriate for those with a horizontal one.

Shavitt, Zhang, and Johnson (2006) asked U.S. respondents to write advertisements that they personally would find persuasive. The extent to which the ad appeals that they wrote emphasized status themes was

positively correlated with respondents' vertical cultural orientation and negatively correlated with their horizontal cultural orientation. Moreover, content analyses of magazine advertisements in several countries suggested that status-oriented themes of hierarchy, prominence, luxury and distinction were generally more prevalent in societies presumed to have vertical cultural profiles (e.g., Korea, Russia) than a horizontal cultural profile (Denmark). Lalwani, Shavitt, and Johnson (2006) showed that the horizontal or vertical distinction provides a basis for refining our understanding of individualism or collectivism effects. Their studies showed that individualism or collectivism differences in socially desirable responses appear to be mediated at the individual level by horizontal (but not vertical) IND and COL values. These findings shed light on the motivational drivers linking culture with socially desirable response styles. Specifically, the response styles that were observed appeared to reflect distinct self-presentational goals, that is the goals of being seen as sociable and benevolent (HC) versus self-reliant and capable (HI).

8.3 ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS

Numerous other cultural dimensions deserve further attention in consumer research. A focus on these relatively under-researched dimensions as antecedents may allow for broadening the range of cultural differences beyond those currently investigated. For instance, Schwartz's extensive research (e.g., Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990) has validated 10 motivationally distinct types of values.

The quasi-circumplex structure of values that emerged cross-nationally (Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004) appears largely consistent with the HI, VI, HC, and VC typology. Data from two independent sets of 23 samples drawn from 27 countries (N = 10,857) supported the assumption of contradiction between values such as power and achievement (corresponding to a vertical orientation) and benevolence and universalism (corresponding to a horizontal orientation), which were hypothesized to be structurally oppositional (Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004).

Although few if any consumer psychology studies have employed Schwartz's value typology, it does offer a particularly detailed and comprehensive basis for classification. In his large-scale studies of work values, Hofstede (1980, 2001) derived three other dimensions of cultural variation in addition to individualism: power distance (acceptance of power inequality in organizations, a dimension conceptually relevant to the vertical or horizontal distinction), uncertainty avoidance (the degree of tolerance for ambiguity or uncertainty about the future), and masculinity or femininity (preference for achievement and assertiveness versus modesty and nurturing relationships).

A few marketing-oriented studies have employed these nation-level classifications (e.g., Blodgett, Lu, Rose, & Vitell, 2001; e.g., Dwyer, Mesak, & Hsu, 2005; Earley, 1999; Johnson, Kulesa, Cho, & Shavitt, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 1997), but more potential remains for identifying consequences for consumer judgments and behaviours. For instance,

uncertainty avoidance has been conceptualized as a syndrome related to anxiety, rule orientation, need for security, and deference to experts (Hofstede, 1980).

As such, one might speculate that the level of uncertainty avoidance in culture will predict the tendency for advertisements to use fear appeals or appeals to safety and security, and the tendency for advertisements to employ expert spokespersons. Differences along this cultural dimension may also predict the level of public support for stricter regulation of marketers and advertisers. Moreover, patterns in the diffusion of product innovations, particularly innovations whose purchase entails a degree of risk, may vary with the level of uncertainty avoidance in a society. The main point is that these relatively unexplored dimensions of cultural comparison have multiple implications for advertising and marketing processes.

8.3.1 Culture and the Self: The Self-Regulatory Focus

Regardless of whether they are chronically or temporarily made accessible, alternative self-construals are thought to reflect different psychological goals. More specifically, the independent goal of distinguishing oneself from others through success and achievement and the interdependent goal of maintaining harmony with respect to others through the fulfillment of obligations and responsibilities serve as self-regulatory guides that direct consumers' attention, attitudes, and behaviours (Higgins, 1997).

The independent goal of being positively distinct, with its emphasis on achievement and autonomy, is more consistent with a promotion focus; whereas the interdependent goal of harmoniously fitting in with others, with its emphasis on fulfilling social roles and maintaining connections with others, is more consistent with a prevention focus. People with a promotion focus regulate their attitudes and behaviours toward the pursuit of growth and the achievement of hopes and aspirations to satisfy their needs for nurturance. They pursue their goals with eagerness and are sensitive to the absence and presence of positive outcomes.

In contrast, those with a prevention focus regulate their attitudes and behaviours toward the pursuit of safety and the fulfillment of duties and obligations to satisfy their needs for security. They pursue their goal with vigilance and are sensitive to the absence and presence of negative outcomes.

The notion that people from Western cultures (whose independent self-construal is more accessible) tend to be promotion-focused and people from Eastern cultures (whose interdependent self-construal is more accessible) tend to be prevention-focused is consistent with the pattern of results found in self-enhancement studies. For example, it has been shown that Americans are more likely to engage in self-enhancement that focuses on the positive features of the self, whereas Japanese are more likely to engage in self-criticism that focuses on the negative aspects of the self in

order to avoid future mishaps (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997).

That distinct self-construals are associated with distinct types of self-regulatory focus has important implications for consumer research. First, consumers consider information that is compatible with the dominant self-view to be more important (Lee et al., 2000). Specifically, promotion (prevention) focused information that addresses the concerns of growth and achievement (safety and security) is more relevant and hence deemed more important to those individuals with a dominant independent (interdependent) self-construct (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Lee et al., 2000).

Using different operationalizations of self-construals that include cultural orientation (North American vs. East Asian), individual disposition (Singelis, 1994), and situational prime, Lee and her colleagues (Lee et al., 2000) demonstrate that individuals with a more accessible independent self-view perceive a scenario that emphasizes gains or non-gains to be more important than one that emphasizes losses or non-losses. They also experience more intense promotion-focused emotions such as cheerfulness and dejection.

In contrast, those with a more dominant interdependent self-view perceive a scenario that emphasizes losses or non-losses to be more important than one that emphasizes gains or non-gains. They also experience more intense prevention-focused emotions such as peacefulness and agitation. Thus, consumers with distinct self-construals are more persuaded by information which addresses their regulatory concerns when the argument quality is strong (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; J. Wang & Lee, 2006), but less persuaded when the argument quality is weak.

Matching effects between self-construal and regulatory focus are observed regardless of whether self-construal is situationally made more accessible or culturally nurtured (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Chen et al., 2005). Interestingly, brand commitment defined as consumers' public attachment to the brand, seems to moderate the effectiveness of the chronic versus situational regulatory relevance effects (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005).

In particular, Agrawal and Maheswaran (2005) find that appeals consistent with a chronic self-construal are more persuasive under high brand commitment, whereas appeals consistent with primed (independent or interdependent) self-construal are more effective under low brand commitment. According to the authors, consumers who are committed to the brand have a readily accessible knowledge structure related to the brand. To these consumers, not only is brand information highly accessible, but it is also linked to other chronically accessible cognition in memory. Hence, exposure to brand information such as an advertising appeal is likely to activate their chronic self-construal. Thus, appeals consistent with their chronic self-construal are more persuasive.

However, for the low commitment consumers, brand information is not linked to any chronic knowledge base. Thus, appeals that are consistent with their more accessible self-construal at any one time (i.e., their primed self-construal) are more persuasive. More recent research suggests that regulatory relevance effects may be moderated by involvement such that people are more likely to rely on their regulatory focus as a filter to selectively process information when they are not expanding cognitive resources to process information (Briley & Aaker, 2006; Wang & Lee, 2006). For example, Briley and Aaker (2006) demonstrate that participants who are culturally inclined to have a promotion hold more favourable attitudes toward those products that address their regulatory concerns—but only when they are asked to provide their initial reactions or when their evaluation is made under cognitive load or under time pressure.

The culturally induced regulatory relevance effects disappear when participants are asked to make deliberated evaluations or when they are able to expend cognitive resources on the task. Distinct self-construals with their corresponding regulatory goals also appear to be the basis of different temporal perspectives across members of different cultures such that those with a dominant independent self-construal are more likely to construe events at a more distant future than those with a dominant interdependent self-construal. For the independents, their regulatory goal that emphasizes growth and achievement takes time to attain. Further, their sensitivity to gains and non-gains prompts them to focus on positives (vs. negatives), which are more salient in the distant future (Eyal, Liberman, Trope, & Walther, 2004).

In contrast, for interdependence, their regulatory orientation that emphasizes safety and security necessitates their keeping a close watch on their surrounding environment and the immediate future. Further, their sensitivity to losses and non-losses prompts them to focus on negatives (vs. positives), which are more salient in the near future. Close attention to the interdependence of the self in relationship with others also requires their construing the self and others in contexts that are concrete and specific (vs. abstract and general, Choi, Dalal, Kim-Prieto, & Park, 2003), which are more characteristic of near versus far temporal distance. Indeed, Lee and Lee (2005) observe that those with a dominant interdependent self-construal (e.g., Koreans) are likely to construe a future event to be temporally more proximal than those with a dominant independent self-construal (e.g., Americans); interdependence also responds more positively to events scheduled in the near future than do independents. The implication is that appeals that make salient the temporal distance that corresponds with consumers' self-view would be more persuasive than appeals that make salient a mismatched temporal distance.

It is important to note that the temporal perspective in terms of event construal (i.e. temporal construal) is different from the temporal perspective in terms of how far-reaching the consequences of an event are (i.e., the “ripple effect,” Maddux & Yuki, 2006). The ability of those with a dominant interdependent self-construal to recognize the interrelationships between people, objects, and situations should prompt

them to perceive events to have far-reaching consequences, even though they are more likely to have a proximal temporal perspective.

In contrast, the perception by those with an accessible independent self-construal of people, objects and situations as being discrete rather than intertwined should prompt people to think that the consequences of events are relatively short-lived, even though they are more likely to have a distant temporal perspective (Lee & Lee, 2005).

This section highlights the importance of understanding the regulatory orientation of the two distinct self-views. However, efforts to generalize this relationship should proceed with caution. cultures differ not only in their levels of individualism and collectivism, but also in the extent to which they are vertical (emphasizing hierarchy) or horizontal (emphasizing equality or openness, Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). It is possible that construal-induced shifts in regulatory focus are limited to cultures that are vertical in structure.

To the extent that competing to distinguish oneself positively is more prevalent in vertical than horizontal individualist cultures, an independent promotion focus is more likely among members of a vertical individualist culture (e.g., United States) than a horizontal individualist culture (e.g., Norway, Sweden). And to the extent that obligations and responsibilities are better defined in a vertical collectivist culture with its roles and norms than in a horizontal collectivist culture, an interdependent prevention focus should be more prevalent among members of a vertical collectivist culture (e.g., Japan, Korea) than a horizontal collectivist culture (e.g., an Israeli kibbutz). More research is needed to investigate whether the relationship between self-construal and regulatory focus may be generalized across both horizontal and vertical types of individualism and collectivism.

8.3.2 Culture and the Self: Making Risky Choices and Self-Regulation

Another area of interest related to self-regulation is how culture influences people's attitudes toward risk and the way they make risky choices. Based on the literature reviewed in the previous section, one would expect that members of collectivist cultures who tend to be prevention-focused would be more risk-averse than members of individualist cultures who tend to be promotion-focused (Lee et al., 2000).

In particular, individuals who are promotion-focused are inclined to adopt an eagerness strategy, which translates into greater openness to risk, whereas those who are prevention-focused are inclined to adopt a vigilant strategy, which usually translates into more conservative behaviours (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). Further, options that have greater potential upsides are likely to also come with greater potential downsides, whereas options with smaller potential downsides are often those with smaller potential upsides. Thus, when choosing between a risky alternative with greater upsides and downsides and a conservative alternative with smaller downsides and upsides, individuals who pay more attention to positive

outcomes would favour the risky option, whereas those who focus more on negative outcomes would favour the conservative option.

These different attitudes toward risk are consistent with findings that promotion-focused participants emphasize speed at the expense of accuracy in different drawing and proofreading tasks and that the reverse is true for those with a prevention focus (Förster, Higgins, & Bianco, 2003). However, empirical investigations examining the difference between people with distinct cultural self-construals have produced mixed results. For instance, Briley and Wyer (2002) found that those primed with an interdependent versus independent self-construal were more likely to choose a compromise alternative (i.e., an option with moderate values on two different attributes) over more extreme options (i.e., options with a high value on one attribute and a low value along a second attribute) when choosing between such products as cameras, stereo sets, or computers. When presented with the task of picking two pieces of candy, interdependence-primed participants were also more likely to pick two different candies than two pieces of the same candy. To the extent that choosing the compromise alternative or picking one of each candy reduces the risk of social embarrassment and post-choice regret, these results provide support that those with a dominant interdependent self-construal are indeed more risk averse.

Similarly, Mandel (2003) observed that participants primed with an interdependent versus independent self-construal were more likely to choose a safe versus a risky option when choosing a shirt to wear to a family gathering or when playing truth or dare. However, these same participants were more likely to choose the risky option when making a decision regarding a lottery ticket or a parking ticket.

Along similar lines, Hsee and Weber (1999) presented Chinese and Americans with safe versus risky options in three decision domains—financial (to invest money in a savings account or stocks), academic (to write a term paper on a conservative topic so that the grade would be predictable or to write the paper on a provocative topic so the grade could vary), and medical (to take a pain reliever with a moderate but sure effectiveness or one with a high variance of effectiveness). They found that Chinese were more risk-seeking in the financial domain than their American counterparts, but not in the academic and medical domains. Taken together, these results suggest that while individuals with a dominant interdependent self-construal are more risk averse than those with a dominant independent self-construal in general, they are less risk averse when their decision involves financial risks.

To account for these findings in the financial domain, Weber and Hsee (Weber & Hsee, 1998, 2000) proposed that members of collectivist cultures can afford to take greater financial risks because their social network buffers them from financial downfalls. That is, individuals' social networks serve as a cushion which could protect them should they take risks and fall; and the wider their social network, the larger the cushion. Because people in collectivist cultures have larger social networks to fall

back on relative to those in individualist cultures, they are more likely to choose seemingly riskier options because their perceived risks for those options are smaller than they are for people in individualist cultures.

In one study, Weber and Hsee (1998) surveyed American, German, Polish, and Chinese respondents about their perception of the riskiness of a set of financial investment options and their willingness to pay for these options and found that their Chinese respondents thought the risks were the lowest and paid the highest prices for the investments, and the opposite was true for Americans. Once risk perception was accounted for, the cross-cultural difference in risk aversion disappeared.

Mandel (2003) also found that the difference between independent and interdependent participants' risky financial choices is mediated by the size of participants' social networks. Hamilton and Biehal (2005) suggest that this social network cushioning effect may be moderated by people's self-regulatory goals. They find that those primed with an independent self-construal tend to prefer mutual funds that are more risky (i.e., more volatile) than those primed with an interdependent self-construal; and this difference is mediated by the strength of their regulatory goal in that risky preferences are fostered by promotion goals and discouraged by prevention goals. When interdependent primed participants were told that they had previously chosen a more volatile mutual fund, they were more likely to choose the high-risk versus the safer options.

It is interesting to note that both Mandel (2003) and Hamilton and Biehal (2005) manipulated self-construal but found opposite effects of self-construal on risky financial decisions. Hamilton and Biehal (2005) suggest that perhaps Mandel's (2003) interdependence prime, which implied that "you depend on others," prompted a stronger promotion orientation than Hamilton and Biehal's interdependence induction, which emphasized the notion that "others depend on you." Hence, Mandel's interdependent participants were more risk-seeking. This "you depend on others' mindset may have also characterized Weber and Hsee's (1998) risk-seeking Chinese participants who were university students, especially in light of their likelihood of being the only child in the family.

More systematic investigations of how culture and self-construal affect consumers' risky decision-making are warranted. Besides having an influence on the individual's self-regulatory focus and attitude toward risks, culture also plays an important role in the individual's self-regulation of emotions and behaviours. Because the maintenance of harmony within the group may depend on members' ability to manage their emotions and behaviours, collectivist cultures tend to emphasize the control and moderation of one's feelings and actions more so than do individualistic cultures (Potter, 1988; Russell & Yik, 1996; Tsai & Levenson, 1997).

Indeed, it has been reported that members of collectivist cultures often control their negative emotions and only display positive emotions to acquaintances (Gudykunst, 1993). Children in these societies are also

socialized to control their impulses at an early age (Ho, 1994). It follows that culture will play an important role in consumers' purchase behaviour by imposing norms on the appropriateness of impulse buying activities (Kacen & Lee, 2002).

When consumers believe that impulse buying is socially unacceptable, they are more likely to refrain from acting on their impulsive tendencies (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Whereas members of individualist cultures are more motivated by their own preferences and personal goals, members of collectivist cultures are often motivated by norms and duties imposed by society. Thus, people with a dominant interdependent self-construal who tend to focus on relationship harmony and group preferences should be better at monitoring and adjusting their behaviour based on "what is right" rather than on "what I want."

Consistent with this notion, Kacen and Lee (2002) surveyed respondents from Australia, the U.S. Midwest, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, and found that the relationship between trait buying impulsiveness and actual impulsive buying behaviour is stronger for individualists (respondents from Australia, and the United States) than for collectivists (respondents from Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore). Further, this relationship is observed to be correlated with respondents' independent self-construal among the individualists, but not among the collectivists.

These results are consistent with findings that attitude-behaviour correlations are weaker in collectivist than individualist cultures (Bagozzi, Wong, Abe, & Bergami, 2000; Kashima, Siegal, Tanaka, & Kashima, 1992; Lee, 2000). Along similar lines, Chen, Ng, and Rao (2005) also find that consumers with a dominant independent self-construal are less patient in that they are willing to pay more to expedite the delivery of an online book purchase than those with a dominant interdependent self-construal. However, there are also reasons to believe that those with a dominant independent self-construal may have better self-control than those whose interdependent self-construal is more dominant.

Recent research by Dholakia and his colleagues (Dholakia, Gopinath, Bagozzi, & Natarajan, 2006) suggests that although prevention-focused consumers report lower desires for tempting objects, it is the promotion-focused consumers who are more successful in resisting temptation. More specifically, their participants were asked to imagine that they were on a tight budget shopping for socks, and were tempted with an expensive sweater. The approach to the self-control strategies of the promotion-primed participants, which tended to focus on achieving their goal (e.g., "socks are more important right now"), was more effective than the avoidance strategies employed by the prevention-primed participants, which tended to focus on the temptation (e.g., "I don't need this sweater"). Future research is warranted to investigate the role that culture and self-construal play in self-regulation and impulse purchase behaviour.

8.3.3 Culture and Consumer Persuasion

Most research on cultural influences on judgment and persuasion has examined the implications of individualism/collectivism or independent/interdependent self-construals. Initial research on these questions examined the degree to which the prevalence or the persuasiveness of appeals matches the cultural value orientation of the society. Several of these studies sought evidence for “cultural matching” in the nature of appeals that tend to be found in a society’s advertising media. Others examined whether culturally matched message appeals have a greater persuasive impact than mismatched messages.

8.3.4 Content Analysis: Cultural Differences in the Prevalence of Appeals

Through content analyses of advertisements, researchers can infer changes in consumption and cultural values from changes in advertising appeals (Pollay, 1986). Cross-cultural comparisons can also yield evidence for distinctions between cultures. For instance, U. S. advertisers are often exhorted to focus on the advertised brand’s attributes and advantages (e.g., Ogilvy, 1985), based on the assumption that consumer learning about the brand precedes other marketing effects, such as liking and buying the brand (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961), at least under high involvement conditions (Vaughn, 1980). Thus, advertisements that attempt to “teach” the consumer about the advertised brand are typical in the United States, although other types of advertisements are also used.

In contrast, as Miracle (1987) has suggested, the typical goal of advertisements in Japan appears very different. There, advertisements tend to focus on “making friends” with the audience and showing that the company understands their feelings (Javalgi, Cutler, & Malhotra, 1995). The assumption is that consumers will buy once they feel familiar with and have a sense of trust in the company. Because Japan, Korea, and other Pacific Rim countries are collectivist, “high context” cultures that tend toward implicit and indirect communication practices (Hall, 1976),

Miracle suggested that the mood and tone of commercials in these countries will be particularly important in establishing good feelings about the advertiser (see also Taylor, Miracle, & Wilson, 1997). Indeed, studies have shown that advertisements in Japan and Korea rely more on symbolism, aesthetics, and moods; and less on direct approaches such as brand comparisons than do advertisements in the United States (Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, & Kropp, 1999; di Benedetto, Tamate, & Chandran, 1992; Hong et al., 1987; Javalgi et al., 1995).

This is not to argue that advertisements in collectivist societies use more of a “soft sell” approach in contrast to a “hard sell,” information-driven approach in the West. Information content in the advertisements of collectivist cultures can be very high (Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989), sometimes higher than that of U.S. advertisements (Hong et al., 1987; Rice & Lu, 1988; for a review see Taylor et al., 1997). It is generally more an issue of the type of appeal that the information is supporting.

For instance, a content analysis of magazine advertisements revealed that in Korea, as compared to the United States, advertisements are more focused on family well-being, interdependence, group goals, and harmony, whereas they are less focused on self-improvement, ambition, personal goals, independence, and individuality (Han & Shavitt, 1994). However, as one might expect, the nature of the advertised product moderated these effects.

Cultural differences emerged strongly only for products that tend to be purchased and used along with other persons (e.g., groceries, cars). Products that do not tend to be shared (e.g., health and beauty aids, clothing) are promoted more in terms of personal, individualistic benefits in both countries. Paralleling the overall cross-national differences, a content analysis by Kim and Markus (1999) indicated that Korean advertisements, compared to U.S. advertisements, were characterized by more conformity themes (e.g., respect for collective values and beliefs) and fewer uniqueness themes (e.g., rebelling against collective values and beliefs).

Recently, studies have extended these cultural conclusions into analyses of website content (Cho & Cheon, 2005; Singh & Matsuo, 2004). For instance, Cho and Cheon (2005) found that corporate Web sites in the United States and the United Kingdom tend to emphasize consumer-message and consumer-marketer interactivity. In contrast, those in Japan and Korea tend to emphasize consumer-consumer interactivity, a pattern consistent with cultural values stressing collectivistic activities that foster interdependence and sociability.

Finally, in studying humorous appeals, Alden, Hoyer, and Lee (1993) found that advertisements from both Korea and Thailand contain more group-oriented situations than those from Germany and the United States. However, it is worth noting that in these studies, evidence also emerged for the value of the vertical/horizontal distinction previously discussed. Specifically, relationships between the central characters in advertisements that use humour were more often unequal in cultures that were characterized as having higher power distance (i.e., relatively vertical cultures, such as Korea) than in those labelled as lower in power distance (such as Germany), in which these relationships were more often equal. Such unequal relationships portrayed in the advertisements may reflect the hierarchical interpersonal relationships that are more likely to exist in vertical societies.

8.3.5 Cultural Differences in Judgment and Persuasion

The persuasiveness of appeals appears to mirror the cultural differences in their prevalence. An experiment by Han and Shavitt (1994) showed that appeals to individualistic values (e.g., “Solo cleans with a softness that you will love”) are more persuasive in the United States and appeals to collectivistic values (e.g., “Solo cleans with a softness that your family will love”) are more persuasive in Korea. Again, however, this effect was

much more evident for products that are shared (laundry detergent, clothes iron) than for those that are not (chewing gum, running shoes).

Zhang and Gelb (1996) found a similar pattern in the persuasiveness of individualistic versus collectivistic appeals in an experiment conducted in the United States and China. Moreover, this effect appeared to be moderated by whether the advertised product is socially visible (camera) versus privately used (toothbrush). Finally, Wang and Mowen (1997) showed in a U.S. sample that individual differences in separateness/connectedness self-schema (i.e., the degree to which one views the self as independent of or interconnected with important others) predict attitudes toward individualistic versus collectivistic ad appeals for a credit card.

Thus, cultural orientation as well as the national culture have implications for the effectiveness of appeals. However, such cultural differences are only anticipated for those products or uses that are relevant to both personal and group goals. Wang, Bristol, Mowen, and Chakraborty (2000) further demonstrated that individual differences in separateness/connectedness self-schema mediate both the effects of culture and gender on the persuasiveness of individualistic versus collectivistic appeals. However, their dimensional analysis demonstrates that this mediating role is played by distinct dimensions of separateness/connectedness self-schema for culture as opposed to gender-based effects. Less is known regarding the impact of culture on the cognitive processing of persuasive messages.

Cultural differences in persuasion are also revealed in the diagnosticity of certain types of information. For instance, Aaker and Maheswaran (1997) showed that consensus information regarding other consumers' opinions is not treated as a heuristic cue by Hong Kong Chinese (as it is in the United States, Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991) but is instead perceived and processed as diagnostic information. Thus, collectivists resolve incongruity in favour of consensus information, not brand attributes. This would be expected in a culture that stresses conformity and responsiveness to others' views.

On the other hand, cues whose (low) diagnosticity is not expected to vary cross-culturally (e.g., a number of attributes presented) elicit similar heuristic processing in the United States and Hong Kong. Further research indicates that, whereas members of both U.S. and Chinese cultures resolve incongruities in the product information they receive, they tend to do so in different ways (Aaker & Sengupta, 2000). Specifically, U.S. consumers tend to resolve incongruity with an "attenuation strategy" in which one piece of information is favoured over another, inconsistent piece of information.

In contrast, Hong Kong Chinese consumers tend to follow an additive strategy in which both pieces of information are combined to influence judgments. This is consistent with a view of East Asian individuals as thinking holistically, and taking more information into account when

making judgments (Choi et al., 2003; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001).

Finally, although numerous studies on culture and consumer persuasion have pointed to cultural-congruity effects, suggesting that culturally matched ad appeals are more prevalent and/or persuasive than culturally mismatched appeals, a growing number of studies have suggested that the situation in rapidly transitioning economies may be more complex. In addition, consumers in developing countries tend to respond favourably to markedly Western products.

For instance, in one study of Indian consumers (Batra, Ramaswamy, Alden, Steenkamp, & Ramachander, 2000), brands perceived as having a nonlocal (Western) country of origin were favoured over brands perceived to be local. This effect was stronger for consumers with a greater admiration for the lifestyle in economically developed countries. These cultural-incongruity findings are meaningful because they suggest the important role that advertising can play in reshaping cultural values in countries experiencing rapid economic growth (Zhang & Shavitt, 2003). Rather than reflecting existing cultural values, advertising content in those countries promotes new aspirational values, such as individuality and modernity, hence these new values become acceptable and desirable among consumers

8.4 MEASUREMENT AND METHODOLOGY: OVERVIEW

Substance and measurement artefacts can become confounded if care is not taken when conducting cross-cultural research (Harkness, van de Vijver, & Mohler, 2003; Singh, 1995), and such issues complicate cross-cultural marketing research (Malhotra, Agarwal, & Peterson, 1996). These measurement artefacts may take several forms. Cultural conditioning, for example, can mediate how individuals comprehend or interpret survey questions. Recognized for years as a problem in achievement testing (Flaugher, 1978; Hambleton, Merenda, & Spielberger, 2005; Williams, 1977), the uncritical adoption of measures developed within one cultural context for use with persons of differing cultural backgrounds may misrepresent the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of those individuals, leading to incorrect conclusions (Johnson et al., 1997; Marin & Marin, 1989; Rogler, 1989).

Similarly, culture-based variations in perceptions of social desirability and concerns about social presentation may also be mistaken for substantive group differences, or mask real differences (Johnson & van de Vijver, 2003; Keillor, Owens, & Pettijohn, 2001; Middleton & Jones, 2000). Communication norms are also influenced by culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992; Kochman, 1981) and may contribute to differences in response patterns to survey questionnaires and interviews that reflect cultural, as well as substantive, concerns.

The potential effects of cultural influences on survey data collection have not always been recognized. For example, the highly regarded cross-national study of civic behaviour conducted in the early 1960s by Almond and Verba (1963) compared and analyzed survey data collected in five nations (Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Mexico, the United States) without considering potential culture-based differences in question processing, communication norms or response behaviours.

During that same decade, several other studies began documenting the presence of culture-driven measurement artefacts in survey measures. Dohrenwend (1966) identified differences in perceptions of the desirability of various psychological symptoms across samples of four ethnic groups residing in New York City. These differences were related to the prevalence of each symptom type within each cultural group such that less stigma was associated with the more common symptoms found within each group.

This work inspired a series of subsequent studies concerned with the potential bias introduced by race/ethnic variability in response styles (Carr, 1971; Cunningham, Cunningham, & Green, 1977; Zax & Takahashi, 1967). Around the same time, a landmark study reported by Hofstede (1980) examined survey data collected from IBM employees in 40 countries between 1967 and 1973. Among the numerous important findings reported by Hofstede was the fact that measures of response consent varied across these nations. To address this potential confound, Hofstede reported a method of score standardization that was designed to eliminate the differential effects of consent.

During these same years, research contributed by a variety of disciplines also began pointing to differences in how questions and concepts were being interpreted across race and ethnic groups (Mirowsky & Ross, 1980; Zola, 1966). Collaborations between survey methodologists and cognitive psychologists in the early 1980s led to the development of formal models of the survey response process (Jabine, Straf, Tanur, & Tourangeau, 1984). This work integrated question interpretation, recall, judgment formation and mapping, and response editing processes into a unified conceptual model of respondent processing of survey questions. Subsequent work has identified evidence that race & ethnicity may influence the processes in this model at multiple points (Johnson et al., 1997; Warnecke et al., 1997).

In the late 1950s, concern was also being expressed that quantitative measures were being systematically contaminated by social desirability, or the need for social approval (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Edwards, 1957). Interestingly, one of the first field reports of this phenomenon described a communication pattern among East Asian survey respondents that was labelled a “courtesy bias” (Jones, 1963). This cultural norm, it was reported, emphasized the importance of establishing and maintaining polite and cordial interactions with visitors, even at the cost of providing inaccurate information.

Indeed, it is now understood that this norm can complicate the interpretation of market research data because consumers in some societies hesitate to express the critical product perceptions they hold (Douglas & Craig, 1983; Witkowski, Ma, & Zheng, 2003). Numerous studies have also investigated the potential effects of this and similar social desirability biases on race & ethnic group comparisons (Crandall, Crandall, & Katkovsky, 1965; Edwards & Riordan, 1994; Ross & Mirowsky, 1984).

8.4.1 Constructing Equivalent Measures

Measurement theory traditionally emphasizes the fundamental importance of reliability and validity considerations when constructing surveys and other quantitative measures (Nunnally, 1978). In conducting cross-cultural research, the equivalence of measures is also an important consideration, one that has been all too often overlooked. As van de Vijver and Leung (2000) wrote in a special “Millennium” issue of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, the “uncritical acceptance of observed differences in the social domain as reflecting valid cross-cultural differences (p. 35)” is a serious barrier to continued progress in cross-cultural research.

Recent research has in fact documented numerous examples of cultural variability in the performance of measures initially developed in mono-cultural settings that may raise questions of cross-group applicability. Wong, Rindfleisch, and Burroughs (2003) have demonstrated that the use of scales that employ both positive and reverse-worded items may be seriously problematic in some cultures, but not others, thus limiting the cross-cultural usefulness of this common measurement strategy.

There is also evidence that culture may differentially influence the use of response scale end-points (van Herk et al., 2004), the reporting of behaviour frequencies (Ji, Schwarz, & Nisbett, 2000; Schwarz, 2003) and the reporting of sensitive information (Johnson & van de Vijver, 2003). Although there is growing recognition of the need to address the equivalence of measures, there is little consensus regarding the dimensionality and assessment of that equivalence.

Two very general classes of equivalence tend to dominate these discussions: those that are primarily concerned with the psychometric comparability of measures across cultural groups—what Johnson (1998) has referred to as forms of procedural equivalence—and those that emphasize the shared meaning of the construct being measured—interpretive equivalence. Interpretive equivalence is a necessary precondition for procedural equivalence and it is important to recognize that some constructs may not have the cross-cultural equivalents necessary to develop comparable measures.

Anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists distinguish between etic and emic concepts (Triandis, 1972). Etics are those concepts that are believed to be shared across multiple cultures, and the emics are those that have important meaning within one or more cultures, but are not equivalent within others. As an example, love for one’s children would

seem to be a universal value, and hence, an etic concept. Various cultures, however, may have differing norms for expressing it, a situation that might require an emic, or culture-specific, measurement strategy.

Before developing measures for cross-cultural applications, it is thus necessary to evaluate the degree to which the constructs to be measured are etic or emic across the cultures of interest. Although numerous strategies have been proposed, there is as of yet no consensus regarding best practices for evaluating and constructing equivalent measures across cultural groups.

Several procedures are now being successfully employed to address the equivalency of survey measures. These include cognitive interviewing (Johnson et al., 1997), group translation procedures (Harkness, 2003; Harkness, Pennell, & Schoua-Glusberg, 2004), assessments of differential item functioning using Rasch and item response theory methods (Ewing, Salzberger, & Sinkovics, 2005; Teresi, Holmes, Ramirez, Gurland, & Lantigua, 2001) and covariance structure modelling (Devins, Beiser, Dion, Pelletier, & Edwards, 1997; Scholderer, Grunert, & Brunso, 2005; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). Recent innovative approaches to addressing this problem are described below:

One promising methodology involves the use of anchoring vignettes to confront the challenge of group differences in question interpretations by directly assessing and calibrating survey response categories across cultures. This method, recently introduced by King, Murray, Salomon, and Tandon (2004), measures individual responses to a series of vignettes, which are then used to standardize survey responses across groups that employ varying frames of reference.

King et al. present both parametric and nonparametric methods for making cross-cultural adjustments. A recent application of this technique is described by Salomon, Tandon, and Murray (2005), who use it to assess the equivalence of health self-ratings across six underdeveloped nations. Behaviour coding, a technique originally developed to evaluate interviewer and respondent behaviours (Cannell, Fowler, & Marquis, 1968), has also been recently applied to assessments of cultural variability in question comprehension.

Johnson and colleagues (2006) coded and analyzed more than 13,000 answers to survey questions provided by 345 African-American, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and non-Hispanic white respondents. They identified respondent behaviours that were indicative of comprehension difficulties (e.g., asking for question clarification, indicating uncertainty about a question, rephrasing a question before answering) and examined variability in these response patterns across respondent and question characteristics using hierarchical linear (HLM) models.

These analyses suggested that respondent culture was independently associated with general variability in comprehension difficulty, and also with differences that were linked to specific questionnaire design features. In sum, although advancements have been made in exploring potential

techniques for assessing and establishing the equivalence of survey measures across cultural groups, there remains no agreement regarding best practices in this area. Decisions regarding which approaches to employ are often dictated by time constraints, budget restrictions, and the technical skills of the researcher. There is also no consensus regarding how to organize and define conceptualizations of equivalence.

8.5 CULTURE AND RESPONSE STYLES

Vogt (1999, p. 248) describes response styles as “a tendency ... to give the same type of answer to all questions rather than answering questions based solely on their content.” In other words, response styles represent systematic sources of variation in respondent answers that are determined by factors other than the content of the survey questions. Several common types of response styles include the tendency to provide socially desirable answers, the tendency to provide acquiescent answers, and the tendency to select the most extreme response options when answering questions. Each of these response styles had been linked with the cultural background of survey respondents and may pose an obstacle to cross-cultural measurement.

Social Desirability Respondent reporting of information that projects a favourable image of themselves, sometimes at the expense of accuracy, is commonly known as social desirability bias (Nederhof, 1985). This reporting style reflects the human propensity to emphasize, and occasionally overstate, positive qualities and behaviours while de-emphasizing/understating negative ones. Survey validation studies generally support this presumption, as socially desirable behaviours such as voting (Sigelman, 1982), church attendance (Hadaway, Marler, & Chaves, 1993), and physical exercise (Adams et al., 2005) are often overreported, whereas undesirable behaviours such as drug use (Fendrich, Johnson, Sudman, Wislar, & Spiehler, 1999) and a history of sexually transmitted diseases (Clark, Brasseux, Richmond, Getson, & D'Angelo, 1997) are sometimes underreported.

Several self-report measures have been developed to assess socially desirable response tendencies (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Edwards, 1957; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1964; Paulhus, 1998a). Persons scoring highly on such measures as the Crowne-Marlowe scale that taps impression management have been found less likely to report dark side consumer behaviours and values, such as alcohol consumption, intoxication, and marijuana use (Bradburn & Sudman, 1979) as well as materialism (Mick, 1996).

As noted earlier, mean scores on these socially desirable responding measures have also been found to vary across nations and across ethnic and racial groups within nations (Johnson & van de Vijver, 2003; Keillor et al., 2001; Lalwani et al., 2006), and more recent research is beginning to identify the underlying cultural orientations and values that may account for these differences. Middleton and Jones (2000), for example, have suggested that variability across each of

Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions may underlie higher impression management scores for East Asian compared to North American survey respondents. At the national level, van Hemert et al. (2002) reported significant negative correlations between one of these orientations—individualism scores—and mean scores on the Lie scale of the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1964).

Other research has identified greater tendencies among collectivists towards conformity (R. Bond & Smith, 1996) and unwillingness to self-disclose (P. B. Smith & Bond, 1998), characteristics also likely to be associated with socially desirable reporting. One might also expect that socially desirable response styles would be more common in “tight” cultures, a characteristic closely associated with collectivism (Triandis, 1995), in which prescribed norms of behaviour would be most explicit. However, the nature of the relation between cultural variables and this response style is also dependent on the type of socially desirable responses to questions.

As indicated earlier, Lalwani, Shavitt, and Johnson (2006) argued that two distinct response patterns should emerge as a function of cultural orientations or backgrounds—Impression Management (IM) and Self-Deceptive Enhancement (SDE) (Gur & Sackeim, 1979; Paulhus, 1991; Sackeim & Gur, 1979). Each of these response styles corresponds to different culturally relevant goals. Subscales measuring these dimensions compose the Paulhus Deception Scales (Paulhus, 1984, 1991, 1998b).

As implied earlier, IM reflects the traditional definition of socially desirable responding. It refers to an attempt to present one's self-reported actions in the most positive manner to convey a favourable image (Paulhus, 1998a; Schlenker & Britt, 1999; Schlenker, Britt, & Pennington, 1996). This construct is often associated with dissimulation or deception (Mick, 1996), and is tapped by such items as “I have never dropped litter on the street” and “I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit” (reverse scored; Paulhus, 1998a).

SDE refers to the tendency to describe oneself in inflated and overconfident terms. It is a predisposition to see one's skills in a positive light and has been described as a form of “rigid overconfidence” (Paulhus, 1998a). SDE is assessed by such items as, “My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right” and “I am very confident of my judgments.

Lalwani et al. (2006) showed that U.S. respondents (IND), compared to those from Singapore (COL), scored higher in self-deceptive enhancement and lower in impression management. Similarly, European American respondents (IND), compared to Korean American respondents (COL), scored higher in self-deceptive enhancement and lower in impression management. Moreover, data in the United States as a function of cultural orientation, incorporating the horizontal/vertical cultural distinction described earlier, shed light on the specific cultural goals served by these response styles. Specifically, people with an HC cultural orientation, who

emphasize sociability, benevolence, and cooperation, tended to engage in IM.

On the other hand, people with an HI orientation, who emphasize self-competence, self-direction, and independence, tended to engage in SDE. The observed response styles thus appear to reflect distinct self-presentational goals—to be seen as sociable and benevolent (HC orientation) versus self-reliant and capable (HI orientation). In the consumer context, such findings offer implications for understanding how cultural background and orientation influence the way consumers respond to marketing surveys, as well as the way they view and present themselves to consumers and marketers more generally. These patterns of self-presentational styles may lead those with an HI cultural orientation to express relatively inflated levels of confidence in their own consumer skills and to view themselves as unrealistically capable of making good choices in the marketplace.

Acquiescent Response Style A second response style, known as acquiescent behaviour or “yea-saying,” was first recognized before World War II (Lentz, 1938). Acquiescence is defined as the tendency of some respondents to agree with survey statements, regardless of content. Stricker (1963) distinguished acquiescence from socially desirable responding by suggesting that the latter represented conformity on items for which clear and unambiguous social norms existed, whereas acquiescence represented conformity on items for which social norms were unclear or did not exist.

Hence, social desirability represents a response style motivated by conformity to specific social or cultural norms, in contrast to acquiescent responding, which represents a more general pattern of conformity that is less dependent on question content. Recognition of this phenomenon led to early recommendations that multi-item scales should balance the numbers of positive and reverse-worded items as a method of addressing this bias (Lentz, 1938).

However, as noted earlier, recent research has pointed to cross-national equivalence problems associated with the use of reverse-worded items (Wong et al., 2003). Unlike the social desirability construct, there are no multi-purpose measures of acquiescence available. Rather, it tends to be measured on an ad hoc basis from study to study via total agreement with heterogeneous sets of survey items (Bachman & O'Malley, 1984), the extent of agreement with pairs of oppositely worded items (Johnson et al., 2005), agreement with general sets of items worded in positive and negative directions (Watson, 1992), or by combining two or more of these indices (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001).

Acquiescence may be more common in cultures that value deference, politeness and hospitality (Javeline, 1999). Mounting evidence also suggests that acquiescent response styles may be more common within more collectivistic cultures (Grimm & Church, 1999; Hofstede, 2001;

Johnson et al., 2005; Smith, 2004; Smith & Fisher, 2006; van de Vijver, Ploubidis, & van Hemert, 2004).

8.5.1 Extreme Response Style

It has also been recognized for many years that some respondents prefer selecting the extreme endpoints of response scales (Cronbach, 1946). Systematic preferences for either extreme or middle responses can produce a considerable variance in scale scores that are attributable to this response style, independent of the construct being assessed. There are several approaches to measuring extreme responding.

Most commonly, it is assessed as the proportion of survey items for which a respondent selects an extreme response option (Bachman & O'Malley, 1984). Other approaches include evaluating the variance around mean responses (Kiesler & Sproull, 1986) and use of a measure developed by Greenleaf (1992) that has good psychometric properties (i.e., the items are uncorrelated and have equal proportions of positive and negative extreme response proportions).

As with the other response styles evaluated, extreme responding is known to vary across race/ ethnic groups within the United States (Bachman & O'Malley, 1984; Hui & Triandis, 1989), and considerable evidence exists of cross-national differences (Chun, Campbell, & Yoo, 1974; Clarke, 2000; C. Lee & Green, 1991; van Herk et al., 2004). Additional evidence of a linkage between culture and extreme responding comes from findings that this construct is inversely associated with levels of acculturation among Latinos in the United States (Marin, Gamba, & Marin, 1992) and that English-Spanish bilinguals show a greater preference for extreme responses when interviewed in Spanish as compared to English (Gibbons, Zellner, & Rudek, 1999).

Taken together, these findings suggest that extreme responding is characteristic of cultures that value distinctive, competitive, assertive, decisive and sincere behaviour, and that have a low tolerance for ambiguity (Hamilton, 1968; Marin et al., 1992). Conversely, preference for middling response options may be more common within cultures that value modesty, interpersonal harmony and subtlety. Addressing Cultural Variability in Response Styles.

Multiple approaches have been proposed to deal with the potentially contaminating effects of cultural variability in survey response styles. These include strategies that emphasize the construction of items and scales that are less susceptible to these measurement artefacts and analytic approaches to assessing and adjusting for response style differences across groups.

Some specific questionnaire design recommendations include the avoidance of agree-disagree question response formats (Converse & Presser, 1986) and the use of measurement scales that contain balanced sets of positively and negatively worded questions to eliminate or minimize the effects of acquiescence (Cloud & Vaughan, 1970; Javelin,

1999; Knowles & Nathan, 1997; Mirowsky & Ross, 1991; Ray, 1979). Others have attempted to avoid acquiescence and extreme responding effects by developing ranking measures that are believed to be less susceptible to these forms of bias (Schuman & Presser, 1981; Toner, 1987).

Smith (2003) discusses several additional approaches to designing survey questions that may minimize these response effects across groups. Hofstede, Ten Berge, and Hendriks (1998) review several alternative procedures for scoring questionnaires to correct for acquiescence and extreme responding. Multiple group confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling and latent class factor strategies have also been proposed to identify and adjust for cultural differences in these response styles (Billiet & McClendon, 2000; Cheung & Rensvold, 2000; Moors, 2003; Watson, 1992). Numerous additional methods have also been proposed for addressing social desirability bias in mono-cultural research (King & Bruner, 2000; Nederhof, 1985) and some of these may be adaptable for use in cross-cultural contexts.

As Cheung and Rensvold (2000) observe, however, there is no single procedure that is generally applicable to addressing this issue. Rather, confronting the effects of cultural differences in response styles will require both careful attention to the design of survey questionnaires and careful analyses of the data obtained, using some combination of the procedures currently available for addressing these phenomena. With proper precautions, these errors can be decreased.

8.6 SUMMARY

As marketing efforts have become increasingly globalized, understanding cross-cultural consumer psychology has become a mainstream goal of consumer research. In recent years, a rapidly expanding volume of research has addressed a broadening set of cross-cultural issues and dimensions. Significant progress has come on several fronts, including an enhanced understanding of the relations between culture and self-construal, motivation, self-regulation, and consumer persuasion.

However, with the expansion of research activity comes a greater awareness of the unique challenges posed by cross-cultural measurement. This unit has addressed some of the ways in which culture influenced respondents' comprehension or interpretation of measures, as well as the ways culture influences the respondents' styles in answering questions. Ongoing progress in cross-cultural consumer research will require careful attention to both the methodological and the conceptual issues that remain to be addressed.

8.7 QUESTIONS

1. Explain addressing cultural variability in response styles.
2. Explain Acquiescent's Response Style.
3. Write an overview of the measurement and methodology.
4. Write a note on content analyses with reference to cultural differences in the prevalence of appeals.

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