

## **Luring the Undecided: Factors that Influence Purchasing Behaviour**

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**ABSTRACT:-** In Present Marketing Set-up, the study of consumer behavior has become essential. Consumers are the kings of markets. Without consumers no business can ride. All the activities of the business concerns end with consumers and consumer satisfaction. Consumer procurement behavior has become an indispensable part of strategic market planning. The expand view of consumer embrace much more than the study of why and what consumer buy, but also focuses on how marketer influence consumers and how consumers use the products and services. Consumers are in a tough spot, as they are, on daily basis, expose to different windows of information and varieties of products; many great deal of choices and options available in the market place impulse their purchase decision. This paper aims at exploring the factors that influence consumer buying decision making. The study figures out that internal and external factors influences consumer purchasing power.

**Keywords:** *Consumer Purchasing Behavior, Decision Making Process, Consumer, Marketing*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Consumer behaviour refers to how individuals make decisions on spending their available resources; time, money, and effort on various consumption related items (Hemanth and Shruthi, 2013). Consumer behaviour is very vital to companies and advertisers, knowing consumer behaviour is very essential, it helps a company to persuade a consumer. To have background knowledge about consumer behaviour it gives marketers opportunity to understand the way and manner consumers think, how they feel and above all how consumers select from different products or brands; also how consumers are influence by peer group, family, environment and so on. The concept of consumer behaviour study involves the individual, organisations and the process they use to select, protect, use and dispose of products, brands, services, ideas to satisfy needs and the impact of these processes on the consumer and society (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010). The traditional consumer behaviour focused only on the buyer and immediate consequences of the purchasing process, while the modern consumer behaviour research extends the concept and examines influences on consumption decisions. Solomon et al, sees consumer behaviour as “the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experience to satisfy needs and desires” (Solomon, 2006). Consumers take many forms before and after purchasing of product and the most important is that all the actions are taking to satisfy desire and need (Solomon, 2007).

### **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1.1 Consumer Purchase Decision**

Decision making is the process of choosing between two or more alternatives. Anderson opined that: “All decisions involve alternatives and values, and all decision processes involve problem structuring and evaluation. Yet there are many kinds of decisions. Most are easy, but many are both hard and important to get right. Decisions become hard when there are many values to think about at once and tradeoffs have to be made or when there are many possible futures to think about at once and uncertainty has to be weighed. Tools are available for problem structuring and evaluation that address both kinds of difficulty” (Anderson, 2002). Consumer decision process is the process undertaken by consumer in regard to a potential market transaction before, during and after the purchase of a product, brand or service. (Hawkins and Motherbaugh, 2010) argued that: “The term consumer decision produces an image of an individual carefully evaluating the attributes of a set of products, brands, or services and rationally selecting the one that solves a clearly recognized need for the least cost.” Consumer decision is like other decision making, it involves alternatives and consumers go through the alternatives and choose the best alternative that satisfies his need and desire.

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### **2.1.2 Consumer Decision Making Process**

Consumer decision making process comprises of five stages: the need recognition or problem recognition, information search, choose from alternatives or judgement, purchase and post-purchase behaviour (Noel,2009). The process starts with need or recognition and end with outcomes. Blythe asserts that; many decisions are made without much conscious thought or consideration. Decision making sometimes happens below the conscious capacity. Though it not necessary means the processes used in a complex decision are not followed, it simply means consumer is not aware of them (Blythe, 2008).

- **Problem recognition/need:** problem recognition divided into two categories; first is ‘need recognition’, this occurs when there is a decrease in the actual state. Example, when running out of rice, there is needed to buy some. The second category is called ‘opportunity recognition’, this occurs when there is an increase in the ideal state. Example, if my friend’s phone is better than mine then I’m going to buy one. Need is the starting point of any consumer process. When consumer realize his need then he proceeds to second stage of purchase decision making process, if there is no any need at the mind of consumer the process will end at the first stage.
- **Information search:** after consumer defining his need, he proceeds to find the means of satisfying the need. Consumer at this stage search for information that help in solving his problem or satisfying his need. According to (Al-jaraisy, 2008)) consumer can obtain information about product through different resources, among the resourceful information are:
  - i. Internal resources: refers to the consumer’s past experience, uses, and study of the product. Consumer relies on his past experience in dealing with a specific need.
  - ii. Group resources: in this regard, consumers obtain information through contact with others like friends or neighbours. This source of information is considered as powerful when it comes from reliable person.
  - iii. Marketing resources: these are information prepared through communication efforts made by an organization such as; advertising, personal sales, package labels etc.
  - iv. Public resources: these include mass media, reports prepared by consumer organisations, review, website etc.
  - v. Experimental resources: this includes the possibility of examining and trying the product during purchase.
- **Judgement:** judgement is simply alternative evaluation. Once the information collected, the consumer will be able to evaluate the different alternatives that offer to him, evaluate the most suitable to his needs and choose the one he think it’s best for him. In order to do so, he will evaluate their attributes on two aspects.
  - i. The objective characteristics such as the features and functionality of the product.
  - ii. Subjective characteristics such as perception and perceived value of the brand by the consumer or its reputation.

The consumer will then use the information previously collected and his perception or image of a brand to establish a set of evaluation criteria, desirable or wanted features, classify the different products available and evaluate which alternative has the most chance to satisfy him.
- **Decision making/purchase decision:** At this stage when consumer evaluated different solutions and product available for respond to his need, then he will proceed to the decision stage which is purchase itself. Decisions are made about where to buy the product, when, what payment method, warranties, or to postpone the decision to purchase. The consumer decision will be based on the information and the selection made in the previous step based on the perceived value, product’s features and capabilities that are important to him.
- **Post-decision processes/post-purchase:** when the product is purchased and used, the consumer will evaluate the adequacy with his original needs. And whether he has made the right choice in buying this product or not. He will feel either a sense of satisfaction for the product or otherwise. If the product has brought satisfaction to the consumer, he will then minimize stages of information search and alternative evaluation for his next purchases in order to buy the same brand which will produce customer loyalty.

The aforementioned are the popular consumer decision making processes; marketing managers attempt to influence consumers during each of these stages. Consumers are the centre of many marketer(s)work. While the consumer is part of the marketing environment, it is also very important to recognise and understand the more personal and specific influences effecting consumers and the nature of the decision making process they use.

### **2.2 Factors Effecting Consumer Purchasing behavior**

The decision making process of the consumers are influenced by internal and external factors. It’s important for marketers to understand why consumer behave in the manner he does, how his mind is conditioned and influenced; also an analysis of the basic variables influencing the consumer behaviour will be much useful to the marketers to frame suitable marketing strategies (Hemanth and Shruthi, 2013). Most of the scholars concluded that the major factors effecting consumer purchasing behaviour are four; namely: psychological factor, societal or social factor, situational factor and finally personal factor.

## **2.3 Psychological factors effecting the purchase decision**

Psychological factors are the elements of consumer's mental processes, comprising motivation, perception, learning or knowledge and capacities, attitude and personality of the consumer. These are the four theories that explained psychological factors that affect consumer purchasing behaviour.

### **2.3.1 Motivation**

Motivation is the driving force that causes the change from desire to will in life, for instance, hunger is a motivation that induces a desire to eat. In other words, motivation is the process that influences people to behave the way they do. Moreover, Motivation is an inner feeling that stimulates the action that is to be taken by an individual. A motive of behaviour is considered as the first stage in the analysis of human behaviour in general. From psychological perspective Solomon, opined that "motivation occurs when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy. (Solomon, 2010). In consumer purchasing behaviour, motivation plays a vital role in making a decision. It provides a specific direction or, results in a response.

### **2.3.2 Perception**

Perception is one of psychological factor that affects consumer purchasing decision; the way a consumer perceives things affects his decision. Perception is the way of how an individual sees the world and makes sense of it in his brain. A person perceives the world with his sense organs i.e. sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. "Perception is the process by which an individual select, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world." (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). Two person may receive same message with same content but how each one selects, organizes and interprets the message may be differ. Each person perceives the message base on his own needs, values and expectation.

### **2.3.3 Learning**

Learning involves the transformation of information in the environment into knowledge that is stored in the mind; where learning occurs when new knowledge is acquired. In other words, learning refers to the process by which consumers change their behavior after they gain information or experience a product. Internal needs motivate consumers to seek products or services that will satisfy those needs. Consumers learn by experience that a particular brand will or will not satisfy those needs. "Learning refers to a relatively permanent change in behaviour which comes with experience. This experience does not have to affect the learner directly: we can learn vicariously by observing events that affect others" (Solomon, 2007).

Understanding learning behaviour is very vital to marketers, learning is a psychological factor that affect consumer purchasing behaviour as discussed above before consumer decide to buy product or not he undergo through learning processes. Many strategic decisions are based on the assumption that consumers are repeatedly acquire information about brand, product or service and consumers can be learn to prefer some product over others. It is important for organization to highlight the features of their products and service so as to make consumer aware about those features and in turn their behaviour may be influenced, it is through learning, attitudes, belief, values, feelings are influenced.

### **2.3.4 Attitudes**

Consumers possess specific belief or attitude towards different products or services and this attitude have effect on consumers. Since such beliefs and attitudes make up brand image and affect consumer buying behavior therefore marketers are interested in them. Marketers can change the beliefs and attitudes of customers by launching special campaigns in this regard. "Attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to a given object" (Schiffman, and Kanuk, 2004).

## **2.4 Social factors effecting the purchase decision**

As a social being, a consumer is highly affected by his environment. For instance, consumers often buy a product that enhances their image in the eyes of others. Society has great influence in consumer purchasing decision. Among the societal factors that affect consumer decision are: culture; subculture; social class; reference group; family among other factors.

### **2.4.1 Culture**

culture can be seen as what distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others. From anthropological point of view, culture is described as the collection of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by an individual as a member of society (Cemalovic,

2009). It's important for marketers to know the culture of the people that they intend to target their product to. Marketers should know the characteristics of culture to identify how culture affects consumer behaviour (Yakub, 2011). The dynamism in Cultures slowly changes over time. Marketing managers need to understand both the current cultural values and the emerging cultural values of the societies they serve or they intend to serve. A failure to understand cultural differences can produce negative consequences.

It's difficult if not impossible for marketers to survive by neglecting culture of the society. Why it is important for marketers to understand the cultural impact on consumer behaviour? Because culture satisfies needs, culture exists to satisfy the needs of the people within society. It offers order, direction and guidance in all phases of human problem providing method of satisfying physiological, personal and social needs. Example, culture provides standards and rules about when to eat, where to eat, what's appropriate to eat etc. Culture plays an important role in any society and effect consumer purchasing decision.

#### **2.4.2 Subculture**

A society is composed of several sub-cultures in which people can identify themselves. A Subculture is a group of people within a culture who are different from the dominant culture but have something in common with one another like common interests, religions, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and so on. Subculture becomes part of the main culture due to immigration or temporary work stay; take for instance, United State of America is full of sub-cultural groups like Hispanic people (Spanish and Portuguese), Asian American and Blacks. The purchasing behaviour of these sub-cultural groups is not the same. Another example of sub cultural nation is Nigeria, Nigeria has over two-hundred ethnic groups with three as dominant one (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo). subculture has potential influence on all consumer behaviour. People are brought up to follow the belief, values and customs of their society and to avoid any behaviour that is unacceptable and consider taboo. Considering subculture when initiating marketing strategy is very important for marketers and it provide marketing opportunity.

#### **2.4.3 Social class**

Social class is a group of people who have the same social, economic, or educational status in society (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004) opined that:

“Social class is division of members of a society into a hierarchy of distinct status classes, so that members of each class have relatively the same status and members of all other classes have either more or less status”.The members within each group have almost the same status, income, buying characteristics. Social class influences the decision-making of groups and individuals. To some extent, consumer in the same social class display similar purchasing behaviour (Tenner and Raymond, 2012).

Social class is considered as an external influence on consumer behaviour because it's not a function of feelings or knowledge. Social class is often hard to define. Like in Nigeria many people argued that there is only two social classes 'upper class and lower class' what is certain is that; people are grouped in social classes according to income, wealth, education, or type of occupation. People in the same social class tend to have similar attitudes, live in similar neighbourhood, dress alike, and shop at the same type of stores.

#### **2.4.4 Reference group**

Reference group is an individual or group of people that significantly influences an individual's behaviour (Bearde and Etzel, 2011). Reference group has powerful influence on purchasing decision, people meet in a social setting and discuss their experiences with the products that they have used and, express their likes and dislikes and preference and, attributes of the product. The individuals also buy products or use services which they see others using or buying.

#### **2.4.5 Family**

Family is two or more people living together who are related by blood or marriage. It is a part of a household which consists of individuals living alone or together with others in a residential unit. Study revealed that; consumer behaviour is influenced not only by consumer personalities, reference group and motivations; consumer behaviour is also influence by family. Abraham, opined that:

“The family influences affect individual's personality characteristics. As a primary group the family is perhaps the ultimate face to face interaction and from the individual consumer's point of view, it differs from larger Reference groups, in that family members must satisfy their unique and joint consumption needs from a common and relatively fixed amount of financial resources. Then, the family influences individual personality characteristics, attitudes and values as well as the decision processes utilised in the purchase of goods and services. Family structure or behaviour of nuclear family members at each stage in the decision making process is of fundamental importance to marketers...” (Abraham, 2011).

In a family setting, members must satisfy their individual and shared needs by drawing on a common and shared relatively fixed supply of sources. The individual family is a strong, most immediate and most pervasive influence on decision-making. The husband, wife and children influence each other and are influenced by others.

## **2.5 Personal Factors Effecting the Purchase Decision**

Personal factor is another powerful factor that effect consumer purchasing decision. Each person receives information and processes it and evaluates it in his own faculty of thinking. This means that consumer evaluate the product or brand based on his own view irrespective of other influence group like reference group or family. Consumers own personality influences his decision. Each individual has his own personal likes and dislikes. Personal factors include: personality; self-concept; and gender.

### **2.5.1 Personality**

Personality is the inner psychological features or characteristics that determine and reflect how an individual respond to his environment; those characteristics differentiate one person to another. Personality reflects individual differences; personality consistent and enduring and personality change. Marketers developed interest in understanding how personality influences consumption or consumer purchase. Knowing ‘personality’ will enable marketers to understand consumers better and segment the product to target consumers who are anticipated to respond positively to the product or service.

### **2.5.2 Self-concept**

Self-concept is how a person sees himself, be it negative or positive. In other words, Self-concept can be described simply as how one perceives himself and his behaviour in the market place. It is the attitude one holds towards himself. Self-concept is not realistic because of some unconscious components is always present. Consumers purchase product to enhance how they feel about themselves or to get themselves closer to their ideal selves. There is strong relationship between self-concept and the product one want to purchase. People like to use product or brand which match their self-concept. Advertiser seized this opportunity to advertise in a way that’s supposed to appeal to the ideal selves people are searching for.

### **2.5.3 Gender**

Gender plays a vital role in purchasing behaviour. The purchasing behaviour of men and women is differs, male and female need different products or brands. For instance, when shopping online, men prefer sites with lots of pictures of products; women prefer to see products online in lifestyle context. Women are also twice as likely as men to use viewing tools such as the zoom and rotate buttons and links that allow them to change the colour of products. (Tenner and Raymond,). This shows that men and women are different in terms of their purchase be online or offline. Therefore, when targeting consumers, marketers must take ‘gender’ into consideration. Men and women respond differently to marketing stimuli. Noel asserts that; when targeting men, marketers must present information that men respond to more positively. Usually, this means the information must be personally relevant. As dictated by agentic goals, men are very sensitive to information that is personally relevant. They like to view commercials that relate to products and services for themselves. On the other hand, women are interested in marketing communications that are relevant to both themselves and their family or close friends. (Noel, 2009). In nutshell, men have a different attitude about shopping than women do.

## **2.6 Situational factors effecting the purchase decision**

The social situations in which consumers find themselves determine or influence his purchasing behaviour. “Situational influence is all those factors particular to a time and place that do not follow from knowledge of the stable attributes of the consumer and the stimulus and that have an effect on current behavior” (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010). Therefore, certain social situations can make consumer less willing to buy a products or patronize service. Consumer behavior occurs within four broad categories or types of situations: Communications situation, the purchase situation, the usage situation, and the disposition situation (ibid).

### **2.6.1 Communication situation**

The situation in which consumer receive information has an impact on his purchasing behaviour. Communication situation include: physical situation; time situation.

- Physical situation: one of the examples of physical situation is store design and layout. Marketers need to take physical factors in to consideration when they are designing their facilities. Presumably, the longer you wander around a facility, the more you will spend.
- Time situation: Time: The time of day, the time of year and how much time consumers feel like they have to shop also affects what they buy.

Marketers are able to deliver an effective communication to consumers who are interested in the product and are in a receptive situation.

### **2.6.2 Purchase situation**

The situation in which a purchase is made can influence consumer behavior. In other words, a purchase decision can be strongly affected by the situation in which consumers find themselves. In summary, a situation is the circumstances a consumer faces when making a purchase decision, such as the nature of their physical environment, emotional state, or time constraints. Marketers can control some of these situation but not all are controllable. For example, if a person needs a product quickly and a store does not carry the brand they normally purchase, the consumer may choose a competitor's product.

### **2.6.3 Usage situation**

Usage situation is another important factor that influence purchase decision. It's important for marketers to know when consumers consume brand or product. Example, in Nigeria people consume bread only in the morning that is during breakfast. Moreover, some brands are exclusively bought for specific consumption, situations and which brands are bought for which situation varies between consumers and over time (Sharp, 2014). At this stage market segmentation need to be follow in a logical way to meet consumer's needs. Market Segmentation is the process of dividing a potential market into distinct subsets of consumers with a common need or characteristic and selecting one or more segments to target with a specially designed marketing mix or product, price, promotion, place etc.

### **2.6.4 Disposition situation**

The disposition situation consumers must frequently dispose of products or product packages. Disposal can create significant social problems as well as opportunities for marketers. Some consumers consider ease of disposition an important product attributes. These types of consumers may purchase only items that can be easily recycled. Often disposition of an existing product must occur before or simultaneously with the acquisition of the new product. For example, most consumers remove their existing bed before using a new one. Marketers need to understand how situational influences affect disposition decisions in order to develop more effective and ethical products and marketing programs.

## **III. CONCLUSION**

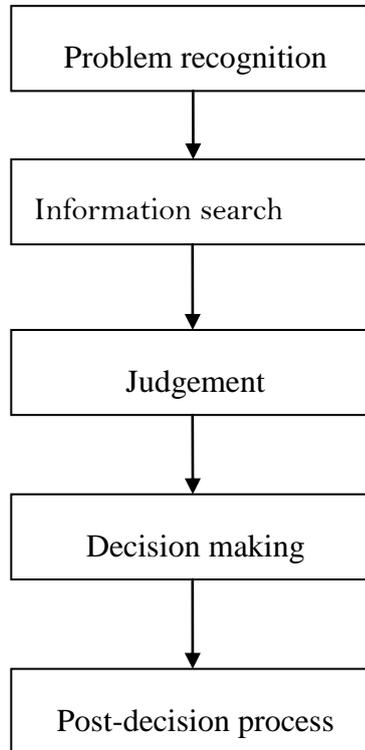
For a successful consumer oriented market service provider should work as psychologist to procure consumers. By keeping in mind affecting factors things can be made favorable and goal of consumer satisfaction can be achieved. Study of consumer buying behaviour is gate way to success in market. Understanding factor that affect consumer purchasing behaviour as disused above before consumer decide to buy product or not he undergo through some processes. Many strategic decisions are based on the assumption that consumers are repeatedly acquire information about brand, product or service and consumers can be learn to prefer some product over others. It is important for organization to highlight the features of their products and service so as to make consumer aware about those features and in turn their behaviour may be influenced, it is through learning, attitudes, belief, values, feelings are influenced. "Study of consumer behaviour enables marketers to understand and predict consumer behaviour in the market place." (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). By knowing Consumer Buying Decision Process, brands can improve their marketing strategy to effectively respond and be present with their customers at each stage of their buying behavior.

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Figure 1.1 Stages in the Consumer’s Purchasing Process



Adapted from Noel, H. (2009) “basic marketing 01: consumer behaviour”

Table 1.1 Purchasing Pattern of a Social class

Social class	Lifestyle orientation	Purchasing tendencies
Upper class	Good taste Graceful living Good things in life Individual expressions Interest in art and culture	Quality merchandise Expensive hobby Recreation equipment Travel
Middle class	Respectability, conformity, Propriety, social esteem	Items in fashion and related to self presentation; good clothing, neighbourhood and house items for children
Working class	Fun oriented parochial, Unsophisticated taste. Focus on possession not ideas	Newest appliances, Sporting events Newest and biggest items
Lower class	Close family relationships, No interest in world affairs Neighbourhood oriented, want immediate gratification	Status symbols products: enhancing self esteem

Adapted from Khan – *consumer behaviour and Advertising management* p.53