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Vimarsh

An Endeavour to share Knowledge

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BOOK REVIEW:

Supply Chain Management – Concepts and Cases

*By Joshi, Parikshit and Pandey, Manish Ranjan, Dhanpatrai Pub., 2010
Harpal Kaur*

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञा ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप।
सर्व कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते॥

Shrimad Bhagwat Gita, Chapter 4 (33)

"Attaining knowledge is superior to
accumulation of all sumptuous substances.
As all acts finally conclude into wisdom."

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Influence of Promotional Strategies on Consumer Buying Decision Making Process

(A Critical Study of Select Household Products' Market of Jodhpur)

Dr. Ashish Mathur*
Ms. Pragya Priyadarshini Harsha**

ABSTRACT

The consumer market consists of all buyers of goods and services for personal or family use. A consumer is the ultimate user of a product or service. Consumer behavior essentially refers to how and why people make the purchase decisions they do. Marketers strive to understand this behavior so they can better formulate appropriate marketing stimuli that will result in increased sales and brand loyalty. There are a vast number of goods available for purchase, but consumers tend to attribute this volume to the industrial world's massive production capacity. The science of evaluating and influencing consumer behavior is foremost in determining which marketing efforts will be used and when. To understand consumer behavior, experts examine purchase decision processes, especially any particular triggers that compel consumers to buy a certain product. This paper is an attempt to study the effect of the various promotional strategies implemented by marketers to create an urge or inner drive in consumer's mind to buy the product of their company.

Keywords: Buyer decision - making process, promotional strategies, buying motives.

INTRODUCTION

People buy to satisfy all types of needs. These needs, as identified by Abraham Maslow in the early 1940s, may be physical or biological, for safety and security, for love and affiliation, to obtain prestige and esteem, or for self-fulfillment. For example, connecting products with love or belonging has been a success for several wildly popular campaigns such as "Reach Out and Touch Someone," "Fly the Friendly Skies," and "Gentlemen Prefer Hanes." This type of focus might link products either to the attainment of love and belonging, or by linking those products with people similar to those with whom people would like to associate.

Prestige is another intangible need, and those

concerned with status will pay for it. However, goods appealing to this type of need must be viewed as high-profile products that others will see in use. One benefit of targeting this type of market is that the demand curve for luxury products is typically the reverse of the standard; high-status products sell better with higher prices.

Some equate the type of need to be met with certain classes of goods. For instance, a need for achievement might drive people to perform difficult tasks, to exercise skills and talents, and to invest in products such as tools, do-it-yourself materials, and self-improvement programs, among others. The need to nurture or for nurturing leads consumers to buy products associated with things such as parenthood, cooking, pets, houseplants, and charitable service appeals.

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Personality traits and characteristics are also important to establish how consumers meet their needs. Pragmatists used to buy what is practical or useful, and they make purchases based more on quality and durability than on physical beauty. The aesthetically inclined consumer, on the other hand, is drawn to objects that project symmetry, harmony, and beauty. Intellectuals are more interested in obtaining knowledge and truth and tend to be more critical. They also like to compare and contrast similar products before making the decision to buy. Politically motivated people seek out products and services that will give them an "edge," enhancing power and social position. And people who are more social can best be motivated by appealing to their fondness for humanity with advertising that suggests empathy, kindness, and nurturing behavior.

Consumers also vary in how they determine the needs; they want to satisfy while purchasing products and services. Are they more concerned with meeting their own needs and buying what they want to, for their own happiness? Or do they rely on the opinions of others to determine what products and services they should be using? This determines, for example, whether or not they will make a purchase just because it's the newest, most popular item available or because it is truly what they need and/or want. This also influences the way marketers will advertise products.

Review of Literature

Batra and Kazmi (2004) concluded in their research that the purchase decision of certain products is primarily based on feeling based choice. The evaluation is simply based on the imagination of how the product or service will make the consumer feel while using it. Consumers' evaluation is likely to be effective when the underlying motives are consummatory. Broadbent (2007) concluded in his research that despite claims that advertising creates consumer demand, attempts to convince consumers to buy a new product through advertising will do little more than stimulate initial sales. Only successful trials and the subsequent repeated buying of a product will actually lead to the maintenance of consumer demand. Sinha (2008) found in her research work that the purchase made by consumers is mainly to satisfy their demands and to solve the underlying problem. If a consumer purchases a

product in order to fulfill his basic need, it can be said the purchase was necessity driven and it can be analyzed from this aspect as to what motivates or drives a consumer to purchase a product. Similarly, Shove (2009) has argued that in order to understand contemporary patterns of consumption, we need to consider the everyday practices that constitute our lives. Perhaps the question should not be whether or not people buy energy or water efficient washing machines, but why people feel the need to wash their clothes so much more frequently than they have in even the very recent past? If the washing of clothes is determined by socially constructed ideas of hygiene and 'freshness' as well as external (and completely incidental) factors like the weather as research suggests. (Defra 2008), it is as important to understand how these factors contribute to behavior as it is the in store promotions that might affect consumers' choice of washing machines.

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior involves study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy and why they buy. It blends the elements from psychology, sociology, socio-psychology, anthropology and economics. It also tries to assess the influence on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups and society in general.

In Blythe's (2002) word, "Consumer behavior refers to the mental and emotional process and the observable behavior of consumers during searching, purchasing and post consumption of a product or service." Kotler (2008) defines consumer behavior as study of how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use and dispose of goods, services ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires.

Buying Motives:

Motive is inner urge that prompts a person to perform some action. It can be a strong desire, feeling, a drive or any emotion which plays a role in the consumer's decision to purchase a product or a service. Based on past research, consumer buying motives can be categorized from four perspectives. Firstly, the social influences on consumer motives such as the culture, sub-culture, social class, reference groups and families (Peter & Donnell, 2007). Secondly, the situational influences on consumer motives such as physical features, social features, time, task features and current conditions

(Belk, 1975). Thirdly, psychological influences on consumer motives include product knowledge and product involvement (Peter & Olson, 2005). Finally, the marketing mix influences on consumer motives such as product, price, promotion and place (Peter & Donnell, 2007).

Factors influencing Buyer's Decision Process

Group Influences on Consumer Behaviour

Culture is a set of basic values, beliefs, norms, and associated behaviors that are learned by a member of society. Culture is something that is learned and that it has a relatively long lasting effect on the behaviors of an individual. In some subcultures, the husband will play a dominant role in the purchase decision; in others, the wife will play a more dominant role.

Social Class is a group of individuals with similar social rank, based on such factors as occupation, education, and wealth. Reference Groups are the temporary groups, that affect a person's values, attitude, or behaviors. E.g., your behaviors around colleagues at work or friends at school are probably different from your behaviors around your parents, no matter your age or stage in the family life cycle. Opinion leader is a person within a reference group who exerts influence on others because of special skills, knowledge, personality, etc. Family is a group of people related by blood, marriage, or other socially approved relationship.

Internal Influences on Consumer Behaviour

Personality is a person's distinguishing psychological characteristics that lead to relatively consistent and lasting responses to stimuli in the environment. We are each unique as individuals, and we each respond differently as consumers. For example, some people are "optimizers" who will keep shopping until they are certain that they have found the best price for a particular item, while other people are "satisfiers" who will stop shopping when they believe that they have found something that is "good enough. Lifestyle and psychographics, lifestyle is a pattern of living expressed through a person's activities, interests, and opinions and psychographics is a technique for measuring personality and lifestyles to developing lifestyle classifications. Motivation: multiple motives, consumers usually have multiple motives for particular behaviors. These can be a combination of

manifest (known to the person and freely admitted) or latent unknown to the person or the person is very reluctant to admit.

Consumer Buying Process

The marketers are bound to have a full knowledge of the consumer - buying decision process. However it should be remembered that the actual act of purchasing is only one stage in the process and the process is initiated at the several stages prior to the actual purchase. Secondly even though we find that purchase is one of the final links in the chain of process, not all decision processes lead to purchase. The individual consumer may terminate the process during any stage. Finally not all consumer decisions always include all stages. Persons engaged in extensive decision making usually employ all stages of this decision process. Whereas those engaged in limited decisions making and routine response behavior may omit some stages. The consumer decision process is composed of two parts, the process itself and the factors affecting the process.

1. Need/Want/Desire recognition

In the first step the consumer has determined that for some reason he/she is not satisfied (i.e., consumer's perceived actual condition) and wants to improve his/her situation (i.e., consumer's perceived desired condition). For instance, internal triggers, such as hunger or thirst, may tell the consumer that food or drink is needed. External factors can also trigger consumer's needs. Marketers are particularly good at this through advertising; in-store displays and even the intentional use of scent (e.g., perfume counters).

2. Search for Information

Assuming consumers are motivated to satisfy his or her need, they will next undertake a search for information on possible solutions. The sources used to acquire this information may be as simple as remembering information from past experience (i.e., memory) or the consumer may expend considerable effort to locate information from outside sources (e.g., Internet search, talk with others, etc.). How much effort the consumer directs toward searching depends on such factors as: the importance of satisfying the need, familiarity with available solutions, and the amount of time available to search.

3. Evaluate Options

Consumers' search efforts may result in a set of options from which a choice can be made. It should be noted that there may be two levels to this stage. At level one the consumer may create a set of possible solutions to their needs (i.e., product types) while at level two the consumer may be evaluating particular products (i.e., brands) within each solution. For example, a consumer who needs to replace a television has multiple solutions to choose from such as plasma, LCD and CRT television.

4. Purchase

In many cases the solution chosen by the consumer is the same as the product whose evaluation is the highest. However, this may change when it is actually time to make the purchase. The "intended" purchase may be altered at the time of purchase for many reasons such as: the product is out-of-stock, a competitor offers an incentive at the point-of-purchase (e.g., store salesperson mentions a competitor's offer), the customer lacks the necessary funds (e.g., credit card not working), or members of the consumer's reference group take a negative view of the purchase (e.g., friend is critical of purchase).

5. After-Purchase Evaluation

Once the consumer has made the purchase they are faced with an evaluation of the decision. If the product performs below the consumer's expectation then he/she will re-evaluate satisfaction with the decision, which at its extreme may result in the consumer returning the product while in less extreme situations the consumer will retain the purchased item but may take a negative view of the product. Such evaluations are more likely to occur in cases of expensive or highly important purchases. To help ease the concerns consumers have with their purchase evaluation, marketers need to be receptive and even encourage consumer contact. Customer service centers and follow-up market research are useful tools in helping to address purchasers' concerns.

Why Consumers Buy: Need Arousing Factors

Customers make purchases in order to satisfy needs. Some of these needs are basic and must be filled by everyone on the planet (e.g., food, shelter) while others are not required for basic survival and vary depending on the person. It probably makes more sense to classify needs that are not a necessity as wants or desires. In fact, in many countries where the

standard of living is very high, a large portion of the population's income is spent on wants and desires rather than on basic needs. For example, in planning for a family vacation the mother may make the hotel reservations but others in the family may have input on the hotel choice. Similarly, a father may purchase snacks at the grocery store but his young child may be the one who selected it from the store shelf. So understanding consumer purchase behavior involves not only understanding how decisions are made but also understanding the dynamics that influence purchases.

Promotion Strategy

Promotion is defined as sales promotion, advertising, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing (Borden, 1984). According to Duncan (2005), promotion is the key to the market exchange process that communicates with present and potential stakeholders, and the general public. Every firm or store must cast itself into the role of communicator and promoter. Hakansson (2005) reports that promotion appears as an issue of how to create an optimal mix of marketing communication tools in order to get a product's message and brand from the producer to the consumer. Advertising, sales promotions, personal selling and publicity can influence what consumers think about products, what emotions they experience in purchasing and using them, and what behaviors they perform, including shopping in particular stores and purchasing specific brands.

Promotions such as price discounts and buy one get one free are effective promotional tools for encouraging consumers to buy more (Shi, Ka-Man and Gerald, 2005). Hung, Le Hong (2005) recommends that plans for promotions should be top-down strategy built plans with tactical bottom-up purchase analysis and that they should be monitored frequently. Steinberg, Jules (2001) points out that a successful promotion often comes from a good imagination. There are mixed findings from past research that promotion considerations either have an impact or no impact on customer motives in retail store purchases. It all depends whether the promotions support private-labeled or national brand products. The promotional strategies create a value addition as they motivate the buyer to buy the product. Consumer motives or goals can be represented by the values they hold. Values are

people's broad life goals that symbolize a preferred mode of behaving (e.g., independent, compassionate, honest) or a preferred end-state of being (e.g., sense of accomplishment, love and affection, social recognition). Consumers buy products that will help them achieve desired values; they see product attributes as a means to an end. Understanding the means-end perspective can help marketers better position the product and create more effective advertising and promotion campaigns.

Consumer Information Processing

The consumer information-processing approach aids in understanding consumptive behavior by focusing on the sequence of mental activities that people use in interpreting and integrating their environment.

The sequence begins with human perception of external stimuli. Perception is the process of sensing, selecting, and interpreting stimuli in one's environment. We begin to perceive an external stimulus as it comes into contact with one of our sensory receptors—eyes, ears, nose, mouth, or skin. Perception of external stimuli influences our behavior even without our conscious knowledge that it is doing so. Marketers and retailers understand this, and they create products and stores specifically designed to influence our behavior. Fast-food chains paint their walls in "hot" colors, like red, to speed up customer turnover. Supermarkets steer entering customers directly into the produce section, where they can smell and touch the food, stimulating hunger. A hungry shopper spends more money. In order to function in the crowded environment, we choose to perceive certain stimuli while ignoring others. This process is called selectivity. Selectivity lets us focus our attention on the things that provide meaning for interpreting our environment or on the things that are relevant to us, while not wasting our limited information-processing resources on irrelevant items. Marketers continuously struggle to break through the clutter and grab consumers' attention. Advertising and packaging is designed to grab our attention through a host of techniques, like the use of contrast in colors and sound, repetition, and contextual placement.

Objective of the Study

An attempt has been made:

1. To study the factors responsible for buyers decision-making process
2. To study the promotional factors affecting consumer's purchase behavior.
3. To find out the motives influencing the consumers for buying process.
4. To identify the motives involved in purchasing household electronic products.

Research Methodology

Research methodology comprises the research design, sample design, sources of data, selection of data, various designs and techniques used for analyzing the data. The methodology used for the study at hand is as under.

Research Design

The research design used for the research problem in hand is causal research as the objective is to determine the effect of promotional strategies causing buying motive r, i.e. whether there is a cause and effect relationship between variables. In order to determine cause and effect; it is important to hold the variable, that is assumed to cause the change in the other variable(s), as constant, and then measure the changes in the other variable(s). This type of research is very complex and the researcher can never be completely certain that there are not other factors influencing the causal relationship, especially when dealing with people's attitudes and motivations.

Sample Design

The sample design adopted for the research problem in hand is convenience sampling. The following points are also included in sample design for the purpose of the study:

- **Sample Size:** The sample size for the study was 200.
- **Sampling Unit:** The sample unit of the study includes male and female buyers of selected household electronic goods.
- **Sample Area:** The sample area for the study in hand was Jodhpur district of Rajasthan.

Methods of Data Collection:

For the study in hand, both the primary and secondary data was collected. The sources of collecting both the data is as follows:

- Sources of Primary Data:** The primary data for the study was collected directly from target respondents through structured questionnaire. This questionnaire includes the personal information about the respondents. The questions asked to respondents were type of promotional strategies that influence buying motives like personal selling, advertising for buying a particular product, motives for selecting the product etc.
- Sources of Secondary Data:** The secondary data for the study was collected from different sources such as technical and trade journals,

articles, newspapers, magazines, internet, periodicals, books, reports and publication of associations related to consumer durable industry.

Tools for Analysis of Data:

Along with the usual statistical tools such as tables, percentages, charts, Chi-square test was used for analyzing the data which helps in arriving at sound conclusions.

Results and Analysis

Table 1: Promotional Measures/Strategies

Product	PROMOTIONAL MEASURES/ STRATEGIES														Total
	T.V. (Advertising, e-media)		News Paper and Magazines		Friends & Relatives		Personal Selling		Reference groups		From Shop		None		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Water Purifier	55	27.50	64	32.00	48	24.00	6	3.00	10	5	8	4.00	9	4.50	200
Inverter	66	33.00	75	37.50	42	21	9	4.50	5	2.50	2	1.00	1	0.50	200
Washing machine	63	31.50	74	37.00	45	22.50	10	5.00	4	2.00	2	1.00	2	1.00	200

It can be directly observed from the table that the highest effective strategy for the promotion of these electronic consumer durables for all the three

products is; newspaper and magazines followed by advertising on electronic media T.V.

Table 2: Buying Motive influenced buyer by promotional measure factor

Product	Buying Motive that influences buyer to buy by Promotional measures																		Total
	Goodwill		Power Saving Aspect		Quality		Guarantee		Services		Advertisement		Entertainment and knowledge		Easily available		None		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Water Purifier	45	22.50	46	23.00	51	25.50	3	1.50	10	5.00	7	3.50	15	7.50	2	1.00	21	10.50	200
Inverter	43	21.50	43	21.50	63	31.50	3	1.50	8	4.00	6	3.00	12	6.00	5	2.50	18	9.00	200
Washing Machine	48	24.00	54	27.00	57	28.50	8	4.00	5	2.50	5	2.50	9	4.5	12	6.00	2	1.00	200

Chi sqr = 66.563; df = 16; Results = Highly significant (p < 0.001)

The above table indicates that quality is the main motive followed by goodwill and power saving, the economical aspect of promotional strategy. While the quality stands on third and other motives lag far behind these strategies.

Overall it can be said that the main motive behind purchasing a particular electronic product is quality of goods followed by need of the goods and thereafter goodwill of the goods. Regarding other factors taken under study, customers give least weightage to guarantee, services, advertisement, entertainment and knowledge etc.

Chi square test also shows that purchase of a particular product is not independent of motive behind purchasing particular electronic good.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions and recommendations are concluded after the detailed empirical analysis in the study so that marketers can understand the consumers' behaviour and their buying motives which would definitely provide fruitful insights and results to the consumer durable companies in achieving their overall organizational objectives:

- More concentration must be on technical aspects of the product and innovative features should be offered from time to time as these household electronic products are totally based on technology which changes at a very fast pace.
- Aggressive brand promotion strategies should be implemented by the companies in order to create a distinctive and unique brand image of their products in the minds of consumers.
- Companies should concentrate more on improving the quality and effectiveness of their after sales services and its network as the after sales services offered by the companies are least preferred by the consumers in selecting a particular brand.
- Print and media advertising should be given more emphasis regarding dissemination of information and promotion of consumer durable products as these sources of information are highly preferred by consumers for information search.
- The dealers should be encouraged through

push strategy by the companies so that they can play a major role in dissemination of information and promotion of products.

- Companies should plan and implement their advertising and sales promotion strategies which are focused on women, as role of women in the family in deciding the products which are generally used by them like washing machine and refrigerator is more significant.

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Web Resources

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