

# Consumer Behavior Models: Descriptive Study

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## Abstract

A person in charge of purchasing a product or service is called a consumer. Consumer purchasing decisions and purchase behavior are influenced by several factors. Literature sources have listed different models of consumer purchase behavior. A consumer purchase behavior model is a theory that identifies how consumer behaves and explicit consumer behavior patterns. These models explain why or how consumers make purchasing decisions. Furthermore, consumer behavioral models typically contain mathematical constructs that describe common behaviors among consumer groups. This can be understood more accurately with the help of consumer behavioral models. Consumer behavior models also predict how similar consumers will behave. In parallel, this study was developed to better understand existing consumer behavior models. Thus, this paper provides an overview of the consumer behavior model.

**Keywords:** *Consumer Behavior, Consumer Behavior Models, Purchasing Decisions*

## 1. Introduction

Every organization needs to study consumer behavior in order to be competitive in the business world. In general, consumer behavior is influenced by several factors. However, analyzing the final user's preferences is essential for success in any business field. Understanding consumer behavior is quite complex for an organizations. Thus, Organizations are disclosing consumer behavior patterns regarding alternatives, selection criteria, product search patterns, and most importantly, product feedback. Studying consumer behavior is important not only for acquiring new customers, but also for retaining existing ones. This can be understood more accurately with the help of consumer behavioral models. Consumer behavior and consumer choices have become important research themes in many areas of consumer science in recent years. A person involved in the consumption process is called a consumer (Jisana, 2014). As Christensen (2022) points out, any individual who buys products for their use or their family use are called consumers. On the other hand, Consumer purchasing behavior is the sum of consumer attitudes, preferences, intentions, and choices related to consumer behavior while purchasing products or services (Kubilay et al., 2016). This includes what purchaser buy, why purchaser buys it, when purchaser buys it, where purchaser buys it. Moreover, this also involves how often consumer buy it, and how often consumer use it.

Schiffman (2008) defines consumer behavior as "the behavior of seeking, purchasing, using, evaluating and discarding products, services and ideas that consumers expect to meet their needs". Thus, Consumer behavior is an approach people take when purchasing goods and services. Moreover, consumer behavior is a vast and complex subject. For the reason, consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by cultural, social, individual, and psychological factors. Therefore, understanding consumer behavior and "knowing the consumer" is not an easy task. Similarly, it is virtually impracticable to exactly forecast how customers will act in a given circumstances (Kotler and Armstrong, 2013).

All marketers try to understand how consumers want to purchase the products. This is what determines the success or failure of a company's marketing efforts. Thus, the chief purpose of this research is to provide a set of consumer behavioral models that explain consumer purchasing decisions. This study explains the importance of consumer's behavior. The study also provides factors that influence consumer purchasing behavior. Therefore, this study seeks to discuss the determinants that influence purchasing behavior and consumer behavior models. This research tries to address the gap of limited research on consumer behavior models. Therefore, this study seeks to discuss the determinants that influence purchasing behavior and consumer behavior models. Consumer behavior is more important for marketers and consumers

too. The investigation of their own behavior is beneficial for the consumers as well.

## 2. Factors Affecting Consumer Behavior

Consumer purchasing behavior is subjective to four important factors: cultural, social, personal, and psychological.

### 2.1 Cultural factors

- Culture: Culture is the set of preliminary values, perceptions, solicitations, and actions that members of society learn from their families and other applicable institutions (Jisana, 2014). As Mehmet and Kubilay (2016) stated, culture is defined as a multifaceted that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, principles, and ethnicity. Individual cultures are part of any society and are an important basis for individual desires and behaviors.

Furthermore, culture includes tangible and intangible values such as approach, values, belief, and character (Hawkins et al., 2001). Culture on purchasing behavior varies from individual to individual based on their habits and beliefs. As a result, marketers need to be alert when evaluates the cultures of different groups, regions and even countries.

- Subcultures: Culture also includes various subcultures like religions, nationality, geographic regions, and ethnic groups. Additionally, subcultures have a propensity to transmit beliefs and values from generation to generation. Similarly, various subcultures such as religion, nationality, geographic region, and racial group influence consumers in terms of knowledge styles, beliefs, arts, laws, morals, and customs (Burgess, 1998). Therefore, marketers can utilize these groups by separating the market into various smaller pieces. As a result, marketers can select products according to specific secondary requirements.

- Social class: This group refers to the hierarchical division of society into various groups that represent social rank and prestige. Social class is an significant determinant of consumer behavior as it influences customer consumption models, existence, media patterns, behavior and welfare (Lisana, 2014).

### 2.2 Social Factors

Another important factor influencing consumer purchasing behavior is the social factors. Social factors are divided into Reference group, family, role, and status.

- Reference Group: These groups are used to guide consumer behavior and attitudes. Reference group identify social norms (Mehmet and Kubilay, 2016). Individuals make use of reference groups as reference

point to study and adapt their attitudes, values, and behaviors in their lives.

- Family: Murdock (1949) defines a family as a social group exemplify by collective living, financial assistance and reproduction. In this category, close friends and family members are considered the primary reference group in an individual's life due to the interface with the individual and the dominance of memebbers in an individual's life (Shukla and Atharva, 2013). However, classmates, neighbors, co-workers, and other connections are part of the secondary affinity group of individuals. .

In this way consumer behavior is powerfully subjective to family. Therefore, marketers try to recognize the roles and influence of husbands, wives and children. Family members' roles in purchasing decisions can be classified as husband-driven, wife-driven, shared, and individualized (Hawkins, 2001). In general, my wife influences my decision to buy a particular product. In such cases, marketers try to target women in their advertisements. It's important to note that consumer purchase pattern change in line with family roles.

- Roles and Status: Not everyone has the same status in society. As such, each person has different position depending on the grouping, association, family, or organization they belong to (Lisana, 2014). Thus, Individual social roles and grade greatly affect consumer behavior.

### 2.3 Personal Factors

Personal factors influence consumer buying behavior. These factors are classified in to Lifestyle, financial Status, job profile, Age, Personality, and Self-Concept (AIPPM, 2010).

- Age: Age and individual life cycle have a potential effect on consumer purchasing behavior. A consumer's purchase decision depends on his cycle of time and life as follows. B. Childhood, singleness, newlyweds, parenthood, etc. It helps marketers develop the right product for each stage.

- Occupation: people's occupation influences their purchasing behavior. For example, a manager buys a car and an employee buys a transportation engine.

- Economic Conditions: Consumer economic conditions have a significant impact on consumer purchasing behavior. High-income workers buy expensive products, while low-income workers choose within their budgets.

- Lifestyle: is considered another important factor influencing consumer buying behavior. The term lifestyle means the way a person lives in society. Individual lifestyle is determined by their interests, opinions, and activities.

- Personality: differs from person to person. It also depends on time and place as well. Thus, Personality can have a major impact on customer purchasing behavior

(Rangaiah, 2021). Personality refers to how a person behaves under different conditions. It has a variety of traits like confidence, behavior and dominance in different situations.

#### **2.4 Psychological Factors:**

Psychological factors are another noteworthy factors that influence consumer buying behavior. These factors fall into four categories: perceptions, motivations, beliefs, and attitudes.

- Motivation: persuades consumer buying behavior. Each individual has diverse needs, including physiological needs, natural needs, and social needs. Thus, need becomes a motivator when directing a person to seek gratification is more urgent. Maslow's theory of motivation explains the need for motivation according to its importance. These are physiological needs, esteem needs, social needs, safety needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1954). Individuals try to satisfy their key important requirements first. When this need is met, it ceases to be motivation and the person progresses to the next level (Redmond, 2013).

- Perception: depends on the information available about a particular product. Perception is selecting, organizing, and interpreting information in a way that produces a meaningful experience of the world. Individual thinking about a particular product or service is their perception of it. However, people with the same needs may not buy similar products due to different perceptions. Perception plays an important role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions.

- Beliefs and Attitudes: customers have certain beliefs and attitudes towards a range of products. Marketers care about these beliefs and attitudes. Marketers create a brand's image and influence consumer buying behavior. Moreover, Marketers can diversify their customers' beliefs and attitudes by launching specific campaigns in this regard. Human attitudes and beliefs influence human behavior towards products and also play an important role in shaping a product's brand image (Rangaiah, 2021).

#### **3. Consumer Behavioral Models**

A model is defined as "a simplified representation of reality designed to show the relationships between various elements of the system or process under study" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997 Year). An extended definition describing the consumer behavior model was given by Assael in 1995, which prevents the common problem of a narrow perspective in considering the problem of consumer behavior over time. According to Assael (1995) consumer behavior model is a "Sequence of factors that lead to purchase behavior and hypothesizes the relationship of these factors to behavior and each other." Consumer

behavior model offers the researcher with a range of appropriate variables. These variables are used to prevent the problem often experienced like a narrow view of looking a problems.

The key objectives of discussing different consumer behavior models are an attempt to study the evolution in idea patterns of different authors on the subject of consumer behavior over a period of time. To achieve the objectives an effort was made by presenting several models of consumer behavior that will be discussed here.

#### **3. Consumer behavior models**

Consumer Behavior Models are divided into traditional and contemporary models.

##### **3.1 Traditional Models:**

Traditional models fall into four categories

- I. Economic Models
- II. Learning Models
- III. Psychoanalytic Models
- IV. Sociological Model

Economic Model: is based on the idea of maximizing profits while minimizing costs. This model therefore focuses on the average consumer and explains what they can buy. At best, these types of consumers want to benefit from lower costs.

Learning Model: is relied on the idea that consumer behavior is determined by common basic needs. Basic needs include food, clothing and housing (Anjali, 2020). The basic needs of consumers determine whether consumers buy. Therefore, consumers tend to buy things that meet their needs and satisfy them. Consumers put off car needs until their hunger is satisfied. Consumers value basic needs over secondary needs.

Psychoanalytic Model: explains that consumers are influenced both consciously and subconsciously. Sigmund Freud discussed his three levels of consciousness (ego and superego) all functioning to influence purchasing decisions and actions (Jisana, 2014). Symbols hidden in a company's identity or emblem can affect a person's unconscious and lead them to buy the same brand product rather than similar products from other companies.

Sociological Model: means that the idea of purchasing behavior is based on its role and influence in society (Anjali, 2020). It can be influenced by the culture of the society.

##### **3.2 Contemporary Models:**

Contemporary Models has four models:

- I. *Howard-Sheth Model*
- II. *Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model*
- III. *Nicosia Model*

IV. Stimulus-Response Model

I. Howard-Sheth Model:

John Howard and Jagadish Sheth developed the Howard-Sheth consumer behavior model in 1969 by. This model is one of most comprehensive models of consumer buying behavior. The Howard-Sheth model defines the difficulties encountered in understanding customer behavior, including customer attitudes and reactions.

Howard-Sheth model is a combined form of factors such as social, cultural, and psychological factors that affect on consumer decision-making in a consistent order. Howard-Sheth model consumer behavior model explains behavior pattern in terms of cognitive functions and focuses on observed and testable explanations for such behavior and its consequences.

The key concept of the Howard Sheth model of consumer behavior is Input and output. Input is a form of stimulus. An exit is a response that directs consideration to a given stimulus and ends with a purchase. Similarly, inputs and outputs are variables that affect perception and learning. Input and output variables are called "hypothetical" because these variables cannot be measured as they occur.

- Input variables: have three different types of sources in the buyer's environment. Marketers provide physical brand characteristics (key stimuli) and oral or image product characteristics (symbolic stimuli) in the form of product or brand information.

These are delivered to consumers in the form of non-personal sources such as mass media communications and advertisements. Companies cannot influence these variables. The third type is presented by the purchaser's social setting (family, affinity group, social class). This social source is personal. Thus, marketers cannot control over this source. These three types of stimuli offer consumers with information about product classes or specific brands.

Persistent and Learning Components: the main focus of the concept is on the psychological factors influencing consumer choice. Some of the contributing factors are perceptual in nature and have to do with how customers see and comprehend data from various model components.

- Outputs: are basically consumer responses according to how they respond to perceptual and learning variables.

- Exogenous variables: these are external factors that influence consumer purchasing behavior. However, these factors can be very important, and they include consumer personality traits, religion, and time constraints (IBS, 2022).

II. Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model (1978)

Engel et al. (1978) created a consumer choice model. The EKB model is another name for this model. This model discusses the consumer decision-making process and how they make choices when given a list of options. EKB views consumer behavior as a decision-making process throughout his model of consumer behavior and identifies five activities that occur in this decision-making process over time.

- Identifying Problems/Needs • Gathering Information
- Evaluating Alternatives • Making a Decision

This model accurately depicts the active information seeking and evaluating process of the consumer. This model depicts the decision-making components as well as their relationships and interactions. (i) Information processing (ii) Central control unit (iii) Decision making process (iv) Environmental impact

Before making a consumption decision, the EKB model goes through five sequential steps that process information. The first stage begins with identifying the problem. This is followed by a search for alternative solutions and the collection of pertinent information from various sources. The external environment as well as the internal Environment (such as memories and experiences). The third step entails evaluating alternatives based on consumer criteria for determining preferences. Once a decision has been made, the consumer moves on

Howard Sheth Model

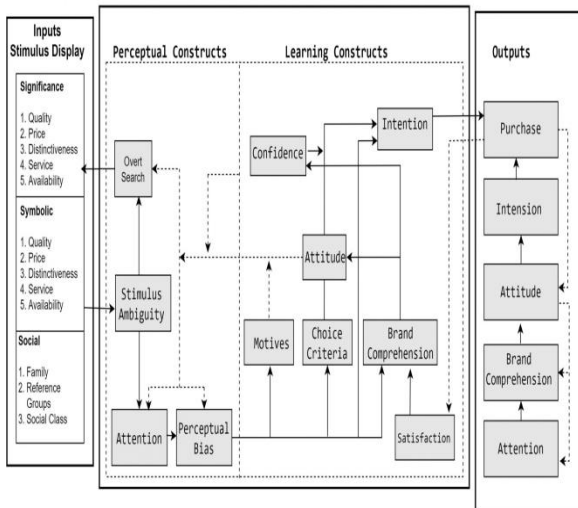


Figure 1: Howard-Sheth Model of Consumer Behavior (1969)  
 Source: Adopted from Anjali (2020)

The four main components of the Howard-Sheth Model of Consumer Behavior are as follows.

- Input Variables
- Output Variables
- Hypothetical Components - Perceptual and Learning Components
- Exogenous Variables

to the fourth stage, where the selected substitute is purchased. The final step is post-purchase assessment. The EKB model framework starts with unmet needs and desires.

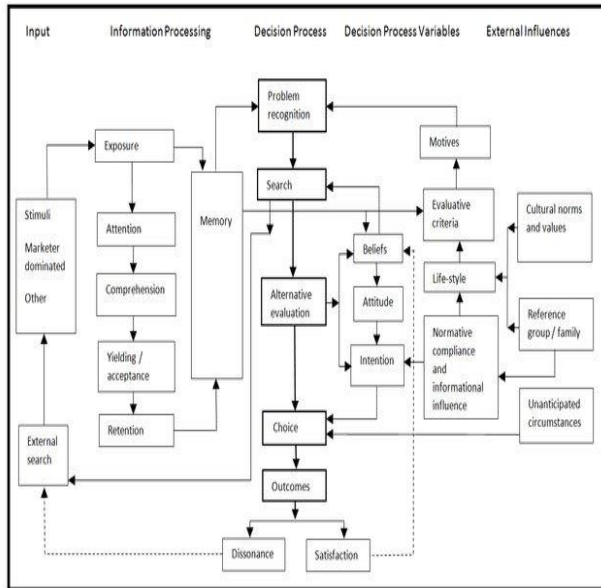


Figure: 2 The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model  
 Source: Source: Adopted from Holland (2019)

III Nicosia Model (1966)

This model was developed in 1966 by consumer motivation and behavior expert Francesco Nicosia. This model represents consumer behavior in terms of four fields, as shown in the diagram. The output of field 1 becomes the input of field 2. This model focuses on the relationship between companies and potential customers. This model suggests that a business's message (advertisement) primarily influences consumer attitudes towards products and services. Nicosia's consumption behavior model can be categorized into four main areas. Field 1: Business Characteristics and Consumer Characteristics. The first field is split into two subfields. The first subfield addresses the marketing environment and corporate communication activities that influence consumer attitudes, the competitive environment, and the characteristics of the target market. Subfield 2 specifies consumer characteristics. B. How do you perceive promotional ideas in terms of experience, personality, and product? At this stage, consumers form their attitudes towards the company's products based on their interpretation of the message. Field 2: Search and Rating. Consumers search for another company's brand and evaluate that company's brand against alternative brands. In this case, the company motivates the consumer to purchase its own brand. Field 3: purchase transaction.

Motivation scores are derived from persuading consumers to purchase a company's products from a particular retailer. 4th place 4th place Field 4: Sales performance feedback. This model analyzes post-purchase feedback from businesses and consumers. Businesses use sales data as feedback, and consumers use their experiences with products to influence individual attitudes and predispositions to.

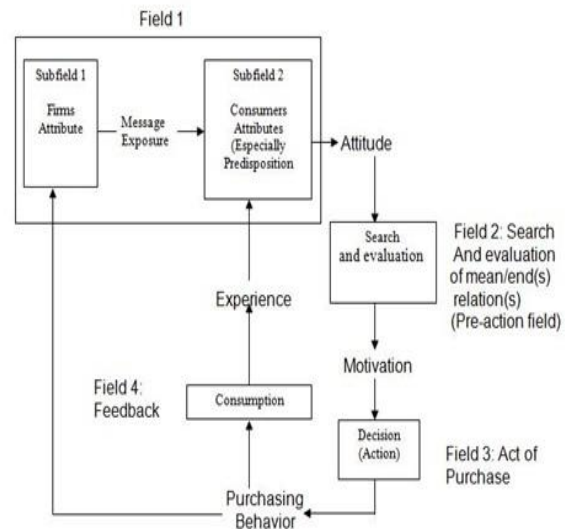


Figure: 3 Nicosia model of Consumer Behavior  
 Source: Adopted from Jagwan (2018)

The Nicosia Model is a comprehensive model to address all aspects of product purchase and use and attitude building, including post-purchase consumer behavior.

IV. The basic Stimulus-Response Model Kotler (1997)  
 Another well structured tested model of buyer behavior is known as the stimulus-response model (Kotler, 1997), which is summarized in the diagram below:

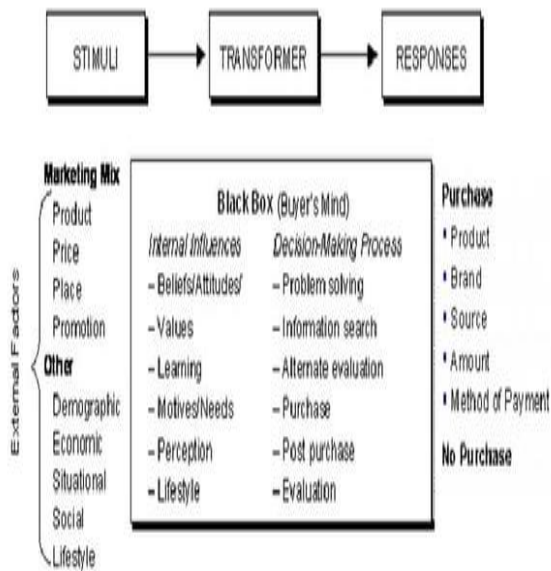


Figure: 4 The basic stimulus-response model (Kotler, 1997)  
 Source: Adopted from (Kotler, 1997)

The stimulus-response model of consumer behavior (Kotler, 1997) understands the purchasing behavior of individual consumers in relation to the purchase of consumer goods. This model succinctly states that individual consumers are exposed to marketing cues such as product, price, location and advertising (Kotler, 1997). In the model above, marketing and other stimuli enter the customer's "black box" and generate a specific response. Marketing managers should try to find out what's going on in the customer's head, or what's going on in the "black box." Consumers are also exposed to other stimuli of the marketing environment, including economic, technological, political and cultural dimensions (Kanagal, 2016). Buyer characteristics influence how stimuli are received. The decision-making process determines which purchasing behavior is undertaken (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

#### 4. Summary

As this discussion has shown, different models of consumer behavior can be adopted. The field is the subject of ongoing and dynamic research, and new insights and approaches are expected to remain unexplored, representing a potentially rich research area with a few notable exceptions. Thus, the role of ethics, social responsibility, and altruism has been largely ignored in the model considered here.

This study suggests that research seeking to integrate such considerations would make a valuable contribution.

A behavioral model review highlights the complexity of consumer choices and identifies the key processes leading to action. A variety of variables are assumed in the model, and there are indications that justify their inclusion to explain its behavior. Through in-depth analysis of different consumer behavior models, marketers can understand how consumer behavior concepts influence the development of communication strategies. These models can be used to assess the information needed to identify and select target markets. The identified models also maintain various marketing strategies such as positioning and market segmentation. Future work may focus on further extending this work by considering applying the discussed models to different environments.

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