

MBA 2 Year 3rd Semester (New Scheme)

Examination, December-2009

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Paper-2324

Time allowed : 3 hours]

[Maximum marks : 70

- Note :** (i) *Attempt four questions from Section-A selecting at least one question from each unit.*
- (ii) *The case study in Section-B is compulsory.*
- (iii) *All questions carry equal marks.*

Section-A

Unit-I

1. Some analysts argue that consumers really do not pursue any kind of decision process but make their selections more or less randomly without any apparent reasoning. Express your views on the argument to highlight the importance of studying consumer behaviour.
2. Explain how each of the following factors might affect consumer search :
 - (a) brand loyalty
 - (b) store loyalty
 - (c) uncertainty about which brand best meets consumers' needs and
 - (d) the importance consumers place on paying a low price.

Unit-II

3. What is meant by a motivational conflict and what relevance does it have for the marketing managers ? Describe how motivational conflict might arise in purchasing :
- (a) CD player
 - (d) A dress by Ritu Beri, the famous designer.
4. For each of the following products cite the importance of demographic variables, if any, and argue how demographics have affected the consumer behaviour :
- (a) Beer
 - (b) Laundry soap
 - (c) Motor cycle.

Unit-III

5. Children do not have much purchasing power, relative to other markets. Yet they are believed to be very important in the understanding of consumer behaviour. Why ? What might firms do to be more profitable as a result of understanding the role of children in family buying ?

6. Discuss the significance of family in consumer behaviour. Which family cycle stage is likely to be most important to marketers ? How are the changing family roles influencing the marketing efforts in India ?

Unit-IV

7. What is the role played by 'word-of-mouth' in convincing consumers ? Justify your answer with an example.
8. How does a group differ from a reference group ? What criterion is used by marketers to classify groups ? Why is reference group influence weak on products, ownership (use) of necessities and strong on non-necessities ?

Section-B

CASE STUDY

BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF MEN AND WOMEN

Marketers are keenly interested in learning who makes the buying decision when a product is needed for the family. In most situations, it is the women who take active interest in buying a product, which is used

or consumed by all members of the family. What motivations women have to make in such family purchases ? A consultancy firm, specializing in motivational research in the area of sales and marketing found that women are psychologically more adjusted to the process of shopping. A women buyer is inclined to spend more time, evaluate more, is more value conscious rather than brand conscious while making purchases. It is not always true to view women as emotional buyers. Men, on the other hand seem to have a natural tendency toward buying image enhancing products they consider "objects of power".

Some people are inclined to believe that as the number of employed women is on the increase, particularly in cities, women are the principal buyers of products used by the entire family. Even in families where only the male member is the bread earner, women is the principal buyer even for everyday consumption products. The implication for the marketers is that they have to address their communications to women for family consumption products.

A woman loves to get the image of a cognitive buyer and many companies have realized this and are responding to this need. Consider the example of Hindustan Lever Limited, a well-known name in the manufacture and marketing of soaps and detergents. Way back in 50s and 60s, their ads for soaps and detergents showed the head of family (the male member) as the decision-maker. A study of buying pattern in 70s made the company realize that showing a woman as the decision-maker is more appropriate and motivates the actual buyers. Furthermore, showing women as intelligent consumers, making carefully considered conscious decisions is more appropriate and accurate rather than depicting them as docile and emotional. This approach became an instant success with the buyers and 'Lalitaji', a middle-aged mother and homemaker, helped the company immensely.

Motivational research also reveals that what motivates men more in making a purchase decision relates to shape, and technical attributes of the product. If a marketer aims to target males for infrequently

purchased, rational, high-involvement category products, the marketer will have to emphasize technical attributes, and furnish detailed information about the product. A man likes to view himself as "time pressured, and value oriented consumer", who knows the value of a brand name more than a woman.

What are the implications for marketers ? The following figures of time spent by women shopping alone or with different companions in a house-ware store may give some hint :

- Women shopping with a female companion : 8 minutes, 15 seconds.
- Women with children : 7 minutes, 19 seconds.
- Woman shopping by herself; 5 minutes, 2 seconds.
- Woman with man: 4 minutes 41 seconds.

The findings clearly hint that the presence of an impatient male companion causes the woman to spend less time and consequently less money. These findings are from a research done in US, but Indian retailers during conversations confirm the same is true here as well. They say

that their lady customers tend to visit them both during the week and weekends. On weekdays, they usually shop alone (or with a female companion). At such times they typically buy for themselves and spend more time. On weekends, they shop with the family and spend relatively less time.

For women shopping seems to be different. They appreciate the effort the manufacturer has gone to in order to produce goods. They appreciate the trouble taken by the retailer to display the goods. There is no rush. They may have some specific items that are to be bought, but they also have a general readiness to look around. They would spend more time examining what is new in the store and what are the various features and functionality of these products. They do not look at everything with a view of buying it. They are willing to look at something appreciatively. If the appreciation is high enough, they are willing to be tempted into buying.

Otherwise they make a mental note of the tempting item and might acquire it at a later more opportunistic time.

Question :

For which categories of products a company should target women ? Why ? Discuss those features of one product each in consumer non-durable and durable category that are likely to influence decision making by women.